Arrowsmith™

SO SMART IN THEIR FINE UNIFORMS

KURT BUSIEK & CARLOS PACHECO

Jesús MERINO • Alex SINCLAIR • COMICRAFT

Thule
Nuuk
Newfoundland
Newfoundland
St. John's
Dakota
Acadia-Canada
Quebec
Montreal
Mass.
N.H.
North Virginia
N.Y.
New York
Mass.
Boston
Mass.
Mass.
R.I.
Connecticut.
Pennsylvania
N.J.
Delaware
M.D.
Washington F.E.
United States of Columbia
Virginia
Norfolk
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia
Charleston
Tejas
San Antonio
New Orleans
Grand Florida
Mexico
Tenochtitlan
Zion
Deseret
Monterey
California
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
N
W
E
S
A New Map of
North America
New Castile

A New Map
of
Europe
Islanti
N
W
E
S
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Scania
Novgorod
Stockholm
BALTIC SEA
Scania
Novgorod
Moskva
Muscovy
Scotia
NORTH SEA
Denmark
Hibernia
Britannia
Gwynedd
Albion
London
Vilnius
Polonia-Lithuania
Cent. Kh.
Berlin
Warsaw
Antwerp
Aachen
Prussia
Lotharingia
Bavaria
Stuttgart
Swabia
Munchen
Paris
Wien
Khanate of Crimea
Helvetia
Gallia
Tyrolia-Hungary
Wallachia
Tuscany
Genoa
Serbia
Bulgaria
BLACK SEA
Navarre
Lusitania
Madrid
Lisbon
Aragon
Barcelona
Castile
Tuscany
The Holy See
Naples
Napoli
Montenegro
Ottoman Empire
Ottoman Empire
Hellas
Athens
Granada
Morocco
Algiers
Tunis
Naples
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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SO SMART IN THEIR FINE UNIFORMS

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The Sound of Distant Guns

A PRELUDE

It has been more than eleven centuries since The Peace of Charlemagne changed the world forever.
But now, Europe burns...

Paris, Gallia. Forty miles from the front.
September 1914
MA FOI, MA FOI -- THE CANNONS! THE PRUSSIANS WILL--
-- OUF!
QU'EST-CE --?
LUTHER! LUTHER! OUT OF THE LADY'S PATH, IDIOT! VITE! VITE!
PARDON, MADEMOISELLE. THE SOLDAT-ZOMBI...
AH--!
ALL THESE SOLDIERS -- OFFICERS, NON-HUMANS, NIGHT-CREATURES!
THE PRUSSIANS MUST BE CLOSE -- THEY'LL TAKE THE CITY -- MURDER US ALL --
MADEMOISELLE, MADEMOISELLE -- CALM YOURSELF!
THE PRUSSIANS ARE WELL AWAY STILL, AND THERE'S NO IMMEDIATE DANGER. NONE. LOOK TO THE ROOFTOPS --
-- AND SEE? THE GARGOYLES ARE STILL HERE. OH, THE NOISE MAKES THEM NERVOUS, BUT IF THE FIGHTING DREW TOO CLOSE, THEY'D FLEE.
BUT NO, AS LONG AS OUR ROOFTOPS AND SKIES ARE ALIVE --
CHRT
CHRRR

-- YOU MAY TRUST THAT PARIS IS STILL FREE!

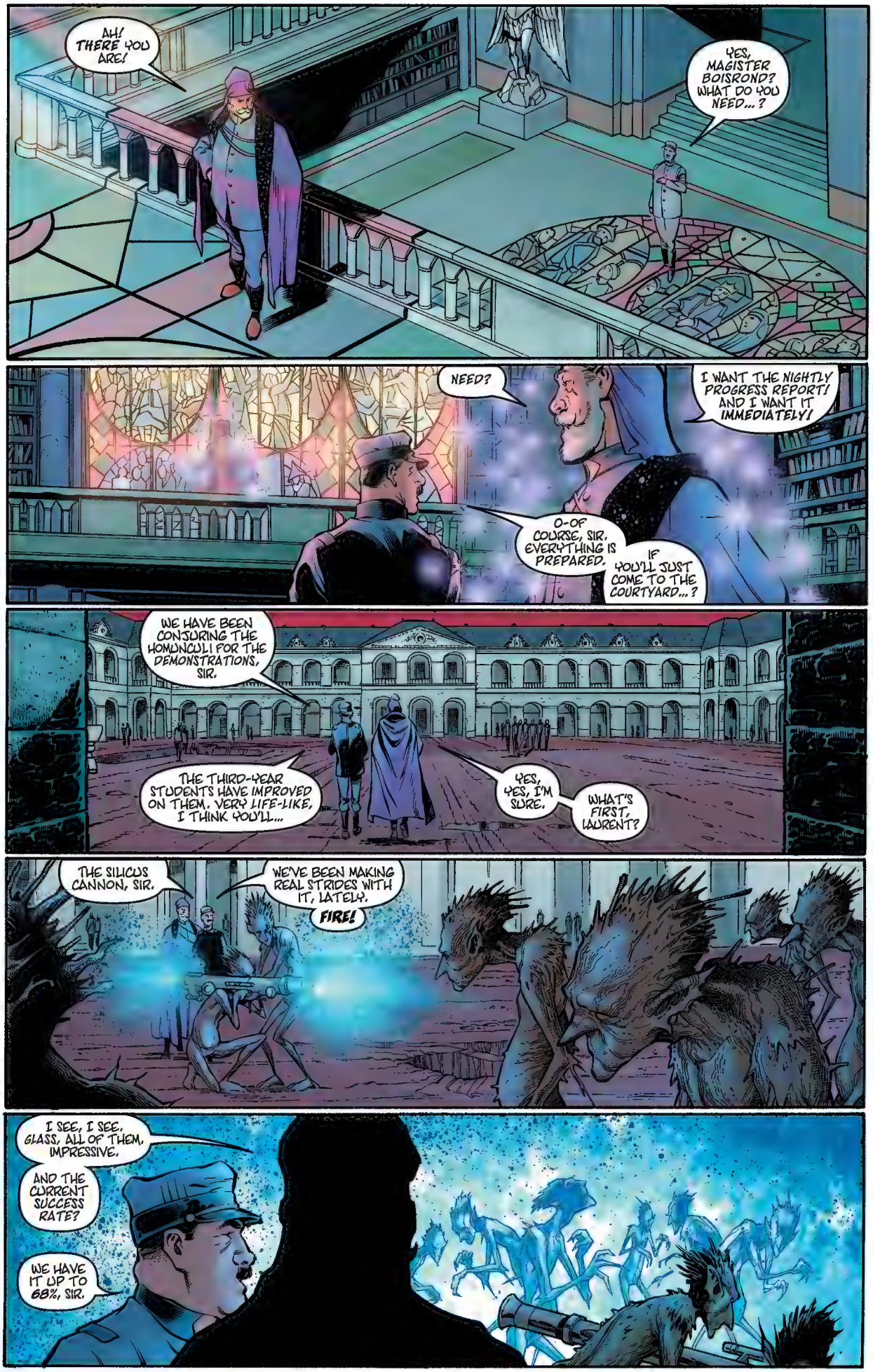
ACADÉMIE MILITAIRE

NOK N--

ÉCOLE DE SORCELLERIE EXPERIMENTALE créée en 1911

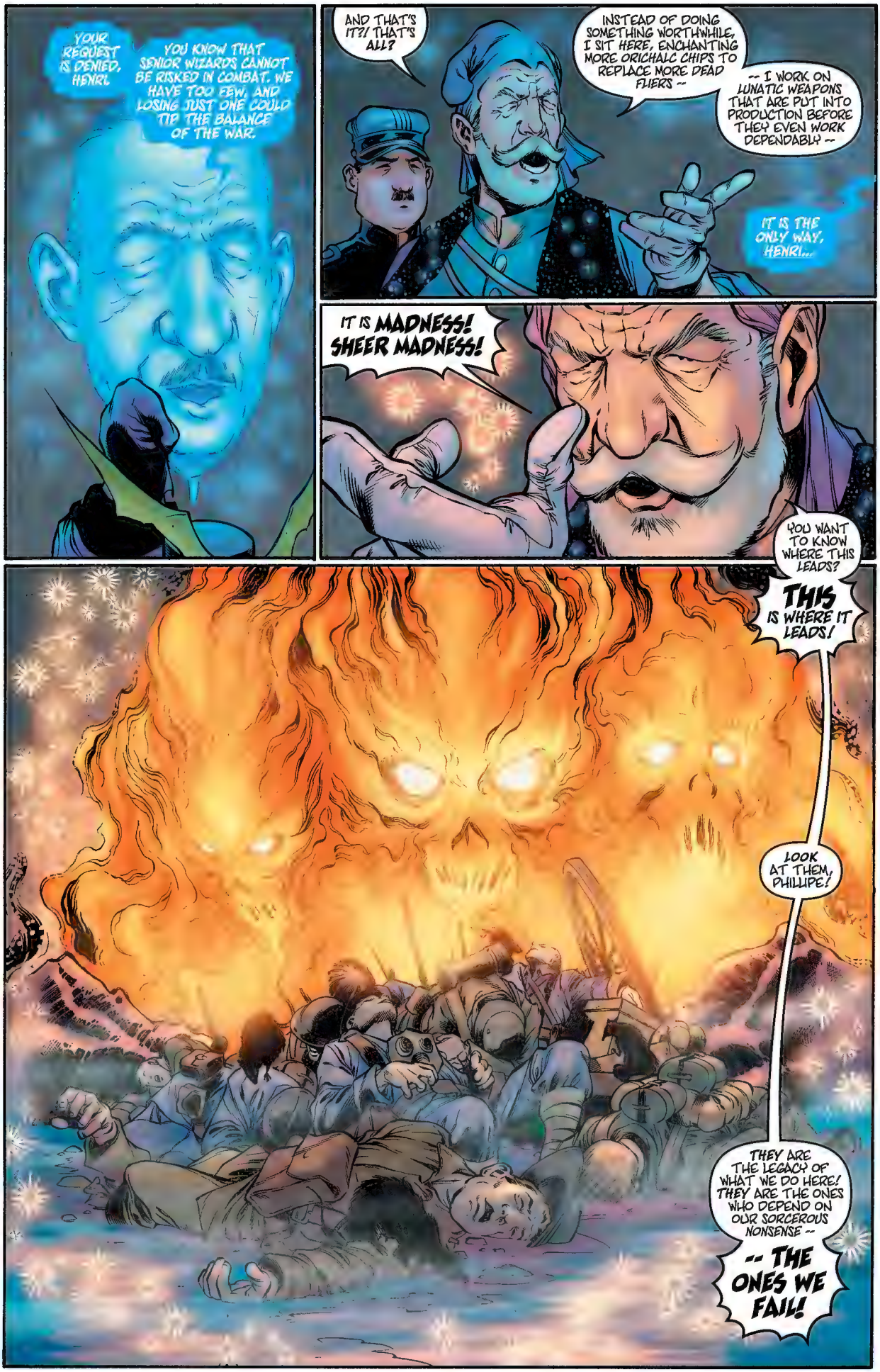
ORDERLY!

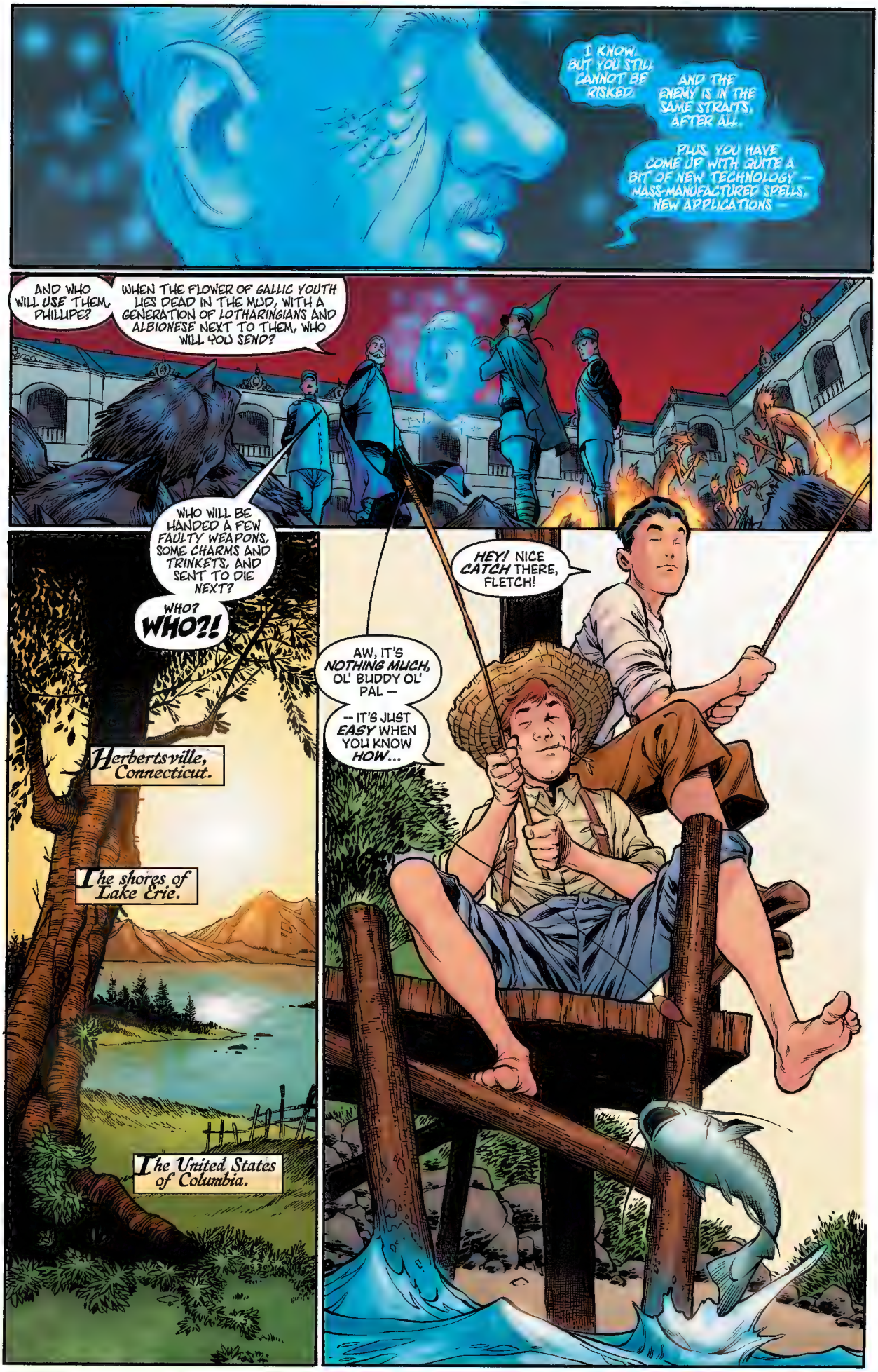
CONFOUND IT -- LAURENT! WHERE IS THAT USELESS...?


AH! THERE YOU ARE!
YES, MAGISTER BOISROND? WHAT DO YOU NEED...?
NEED?
I WANT THE NIGHTLY PROGRESS REPORT! AND I WANT IT IMMEDIATELY!
O-OF COURSE, SIR. EVERYTHING IS PREPARED.
IF YOU'LL JUST COME TO THE COURTYARD...?
WE HAVE BEEN CONJURING THE HOMUNCULI FOR THE DEMONSTRATIONS, SIR.
THE THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS HAVE IMPROVED ON THEM. VERY LIFE-LIKE, I THINK YOU'LL...
YES, YES, I'M SURE.
WHAT'S FIRST, LAURENT?
THE SILICUS CANNON, SIR.
WE'VE BEEN MAKING REAL STRIDES WITH IT, LATELY.
FIRE!
I SEE, I SEE. GLASS, ALL OF THEM. IMPRESSIVE.
AND THE CURRENT SUCCESS RATE?
WE HAVE IT UP TO 68%, SIR.

OH WE DO, DO WE?
SO WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME, WITH A HINT OF ACTUAL PRIDE IN YOUR VOICE, IS THAT WE HAVE A WEAPON THAT FAILS TO WORK ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF THE TIME?
WE...WE'RE WORKING ON IMPROVING THAT, SIR.
IT'S NOT THE CHARGES -- THEY'RE BEING MADE STRICTLY TO YOUR FORMULA. IT'S A MATTER OF THE RIGHT RITUALS FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF THE SHELLS...
=SIGH= SHOW ME THE SPELLS THIS EVENING.
WHAT NEXT?
THESE NEXT TWO AREN'T AS FAR ALONG, SIR. WE'VE BEEN IMPROVING THE BANESHIELD'S RESISTANCE TO MAGICAL ATTACKS.
IT IS QUITE EFFECTIVE AGAINST VAMPIRIC ASSAULT, BUT...
FROOF
I...SEE.
THIS IS STILL PRELIMINARY. WE WANT A WAY TO SEND MESSAGES FROM THE TRENCHES MYSTICALLY, INSTANTLY. IT WORKS, BUT...
...WHEN WE SIMULATE THE MAGICAL INTERFERENCE THE PRUSSIANS CAST, WELL...
...THERE ARE PROBLEMS.

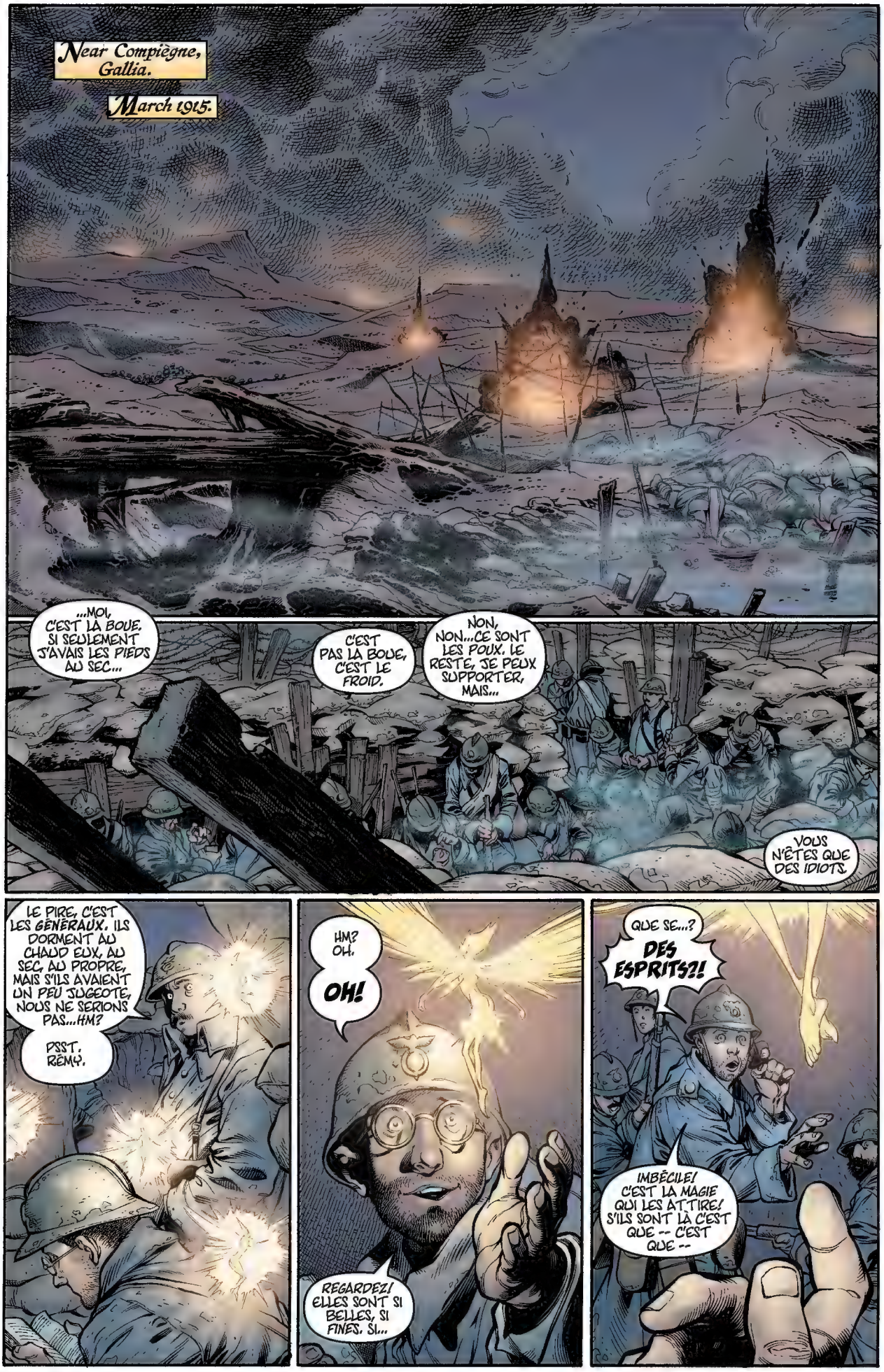
EXCUSE ME, MAGISTER!
URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE MARSHALL'S OFFICE. JUST NOW ARRIVED, SIR.
HMP. WELL, IT CAN'T BE WORSE THAN THIS FARCE. HAND IT OVER, HAND IT OVER.
DIABLE! PAR LES SEPT DIABLES!
THIS IS INTOLERABLE! INTOLERABLE!
AH...AND WILL THERE BE A REPLY?
I HAVE JUST SENT IT.
I SHOULD HEAR FROM THE RECIPIENT MOMENTAR--
YES, MAGISTER BOISROND? WHAT IS SO URGENT THAT IT CANNOT GO THROUGH ORDINARY CHANNELS?
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, GENERAL, I AM ONCE AGAIN RENEWING MY REQUEST FOR TRANSFER TO A FORWARD DIVISION!
I HAVE THE POWER, THE TRAINING! IF I CAN JUST BE OUT AT THE FRONT, WHERE I CAN DO SOME GOOD --


YOUR REQUEST IS DENIED, HENRI.
YOU KNOW THAT SENIOR WIZARDS CANNOT BE RISKED IN COMBAT. WE HAVE TOO FEW, AND LOSING JUST ONE COULD TIP THE BALANCE OF THE WAR.
AND THAT'S IT?! THAT'S ALL?
INSTEAD OF DOING SOMETHING WORTHWHILE, I SIT HERE, ENCHANTING MORE ORICHALC CHIPS TO REPLACE MORE DEAD FLIERS --
-- I WORK ON LUNATIC WEAPONS THAT ARE PUT INTO PRODUCTION BEFORE THEY EVEN WORK DEPENDABLY --
IT IS THE ONLY WAY, HENRI...
IT IS MADNESS! SHEER MADNESS!
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE THIS LEADS?
THIS IS WHERE IT LEADS!
LOOK AT THEM, PHILLIPE!
THEY ARE THE LEGACY OF WHAT WE DO HERE! THEY ARE THE ONES WHO DEPEND ON OUR SORCEROUS NONSENSE --
-- THE ONES WE FAIL!


I KNOW. BUT YOU STILL CANNOT BE RISKED.
AND THE ENEMY IS IN THE SAME STRAITS, AFTER ALL.
PLUS, YOU HAVE COME UP WITH QUITE A BIT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY -- MASS-MANUFACTURED SPELLS, NEW APPLICATIONS --
AND WHO WILL USE THEM, PHILLIPE?
WHEN THE FLOWER OF GALLIC YOUTH LIES DEAD IN THE MUD, WITH A GENERATION OF LOTHARINGIANS AND ALBIONESE NEXT TO THEM, WHO WILL YOU SEND?
WHO WILL BE HANDED A FEW FAULTY WEAPONS, SOME CHARMS AND TRINKETS, AND SENT TO DIE NEXT?
WHO? WHO?!
Herbertsville, Connecticut.
The shores of Lake Erie.
The United States of Columbia.
HEY! NICE CATCH THERE, FLETCH!
AW, IT'S NOTHING MUCH, OL' BUDDY OL' PAL --
-- IT'S JUST EASY WHEN YOU KNOW HOW...

CHAPTER ONE

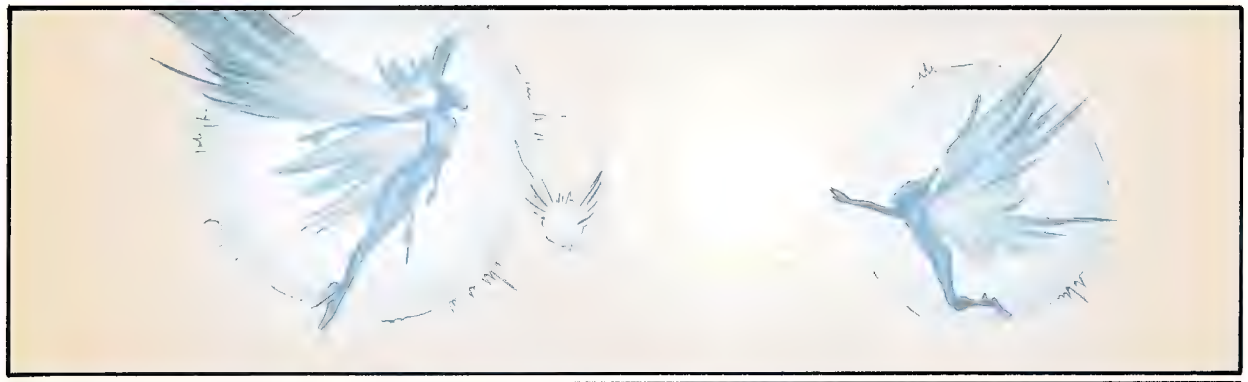
So Smart in Their Fine Uniforms

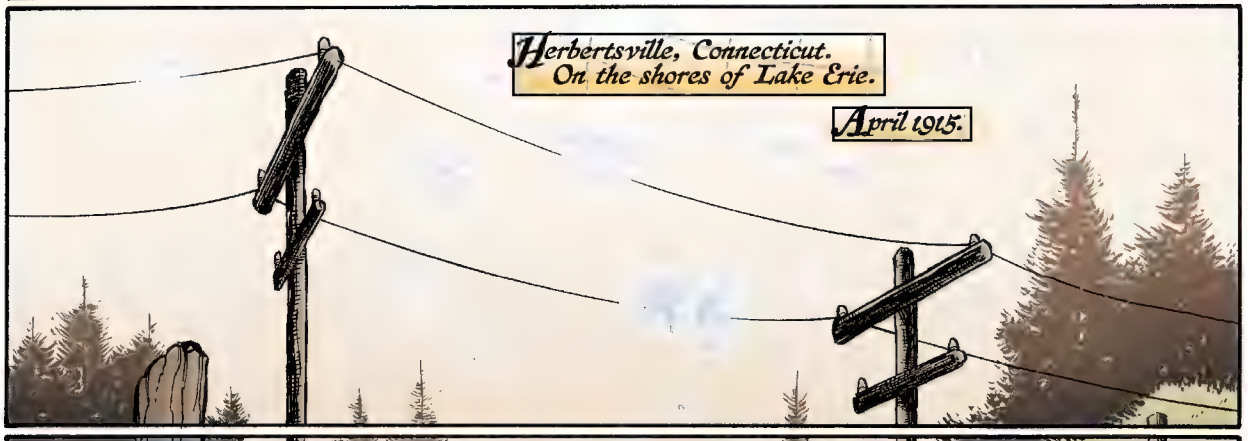

Near Compiègne, Gallia.
March 1915.
...MOI, C'EST LA BOUE. SI SEULEMENT J'AVAIS LES PIEDS AU SEC...
C'EST PAS LA BOUE, C'EST LE FROID.
NON, NON...CE SONT LES POUX. LE RESTE, JE PEUX SUPPORTER, MAIS...
VOUS N'ÊTES QUE DES IDIOTS.
LE PIRE, C'EST LES GÉNÉRAUX. ILS DORMENT AU CHAUD EUX, AU SEC, AU PROPRE, MAIS S'ILS AVAIENT UN PEU JUGEOTE, NOUS NE SERIONS PAS...HM?
PSST. RÉMY.
HM? OH.
OH!
REGARDEZ! ELLES SONT SI BELLES, SI FINES. SI...
QUE SE...?
DES ESPRITS?!
IMBÉCILE! C'EST LA MAGIE QUI LES ATTIRE! S'ILS SONT LÀ C'EST QUE -- C'EST QUE --

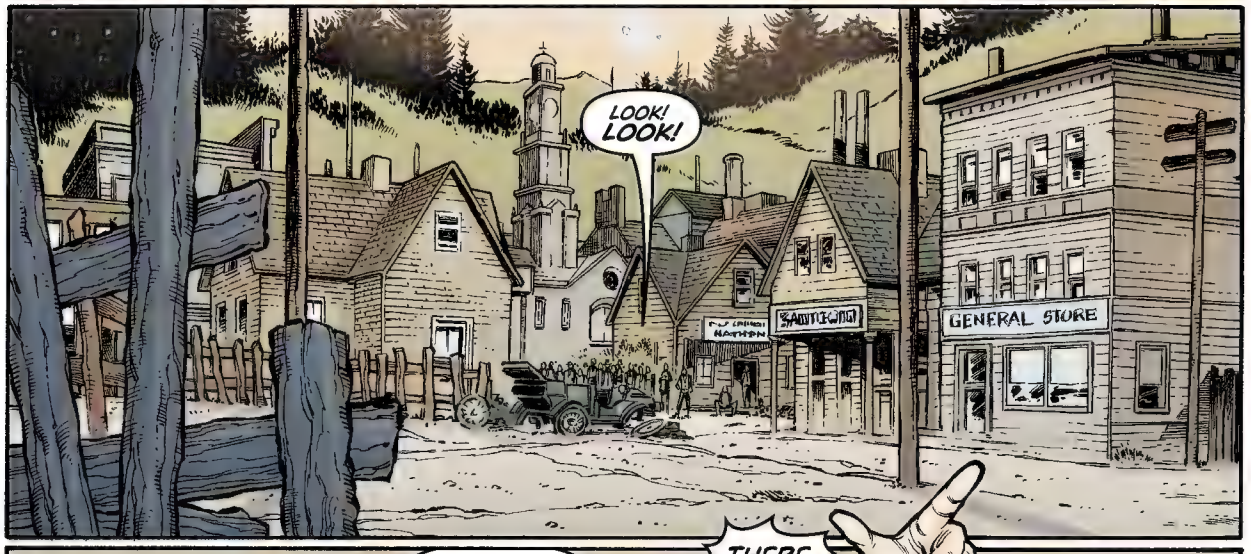
LES BOCHES! VITE, LES GARS -- AUX ARMES! UTILISEZ LES PRANA-CHARGES --
L'ENNEMI ATTAQUE!
L'ENNEMI ATTAQUE!
HRAAAAA
PRAM PAM PAM PRAM PAM
UN MAGE! IL NOUS FAUT UN MAGE, ICI! CONTENEZ-LES -- TENEZ BON LES GARS --
PAM
-- JE CONTACTE LE POSTE DE COMMANDEMENT!
BON DIEU -- BON DIEU --

AH!
MESSAGE AU COMMANDEMENT! SECTION 17-A! LES BOCHES ATTAQUENT-- ILS ONT UN OGRE DES MONTAGNES!
ENVOLE-TOI! FILE! RAMÈNE DES RENFORTS, VITE -- OU NOUS SOMMES MORTS!
HAH!
AAAAA!
PKAM
PKAM
PKAM
PKAM
PKAM
:NGH:
AAAAAA!
KAM

PKAM
HH!
SHREEEEEEEE
DANS LA BRÈCHE, LES GARS! REPOUSSEZ-LES -- REPOUSSEZ-LES! VOS CAMARADES ONT BESOIN DE VOTRE AIDE! LES PRUSSIENS DOIVENT ÊTRE --
-- SEIGNEUR!
HRUHH
AAAAA!
AAAAA!
AAAAA
AAAAA




Herbertsville, Connecticut.
On the shores of Lake Erie.
April 1915.

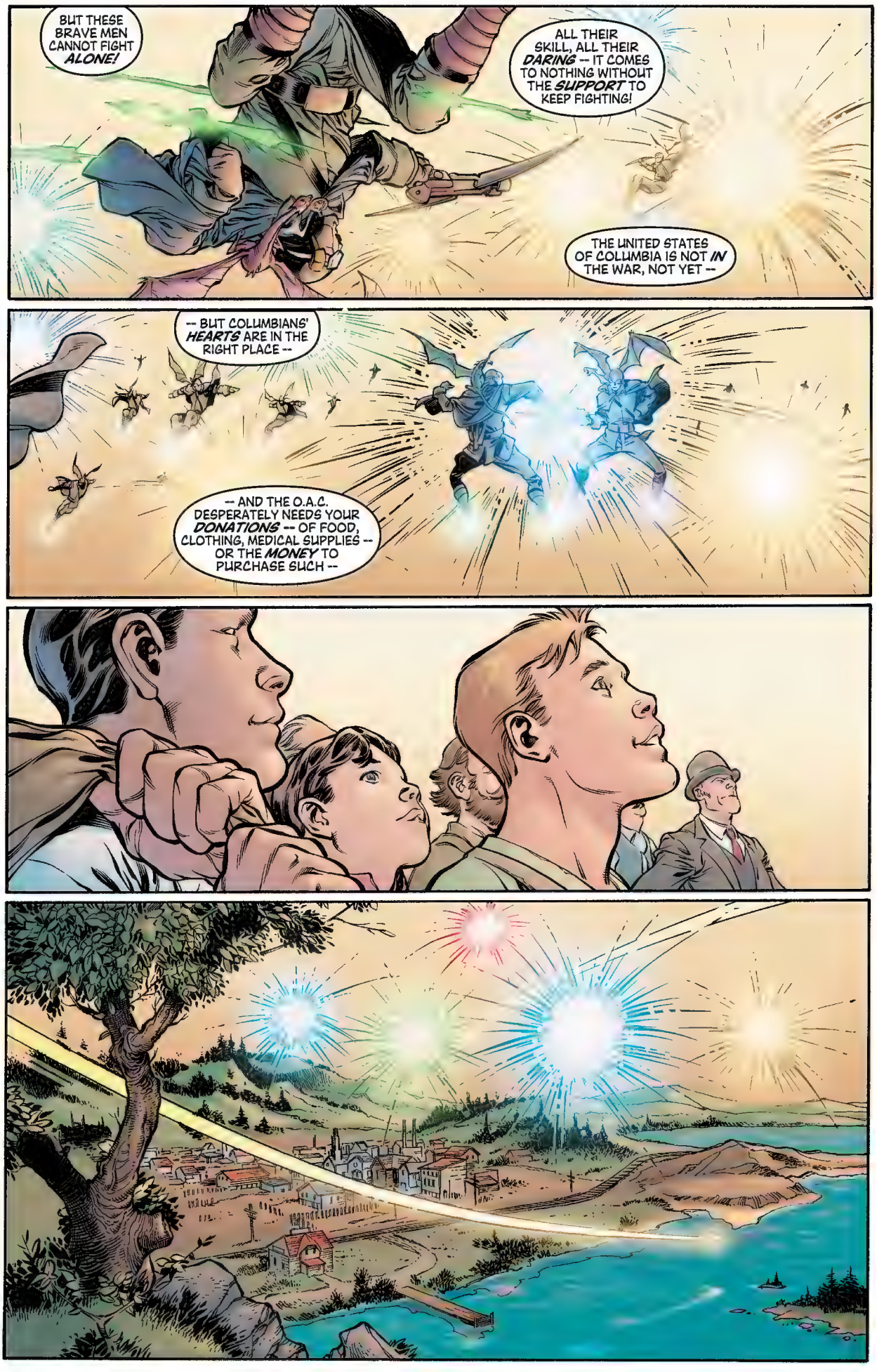

LOOK! LOOK!
GENERAL STORE

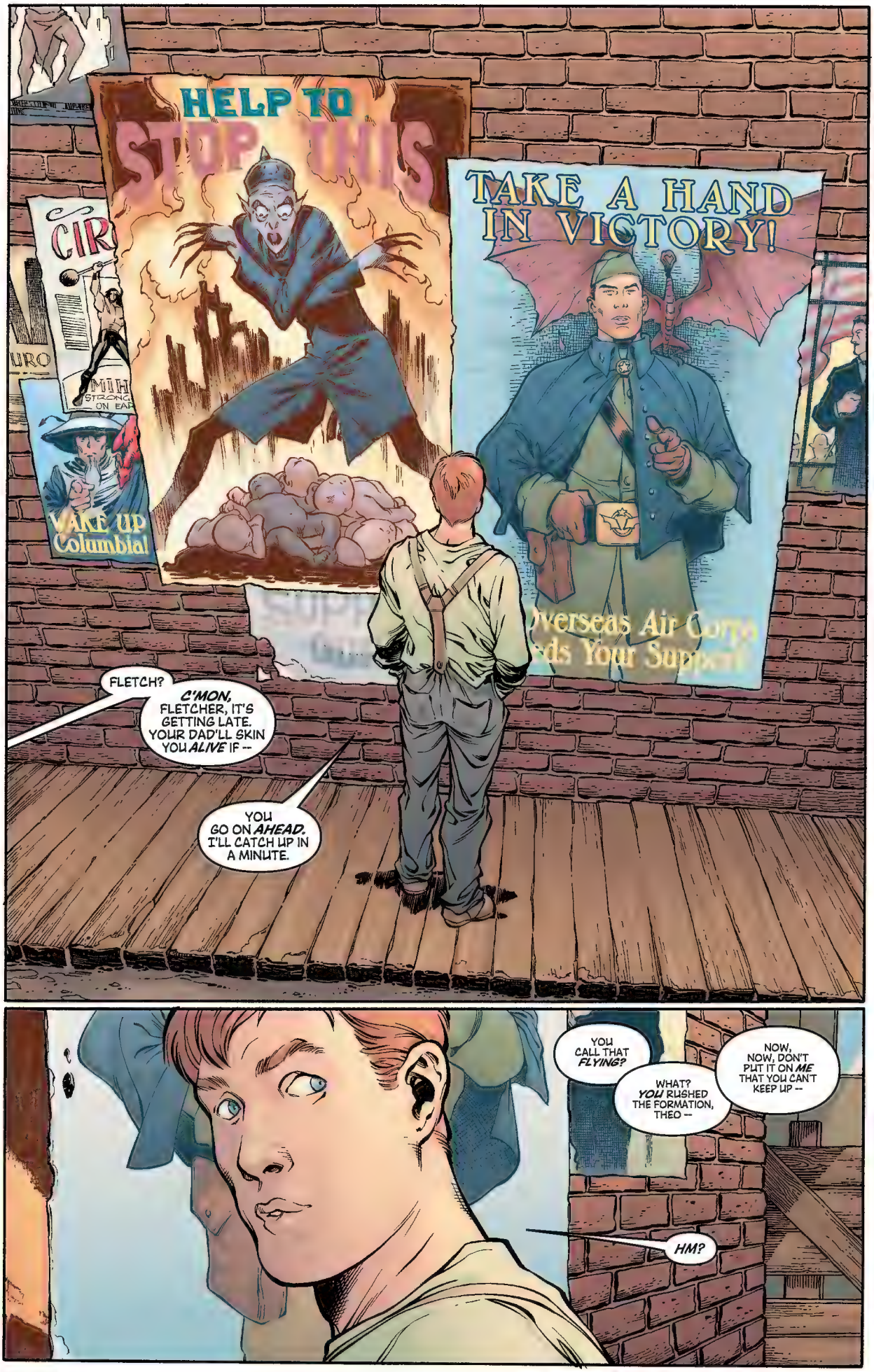
OVER THE LIVERY STABLES! LOOK!
THERE THEY ARE!

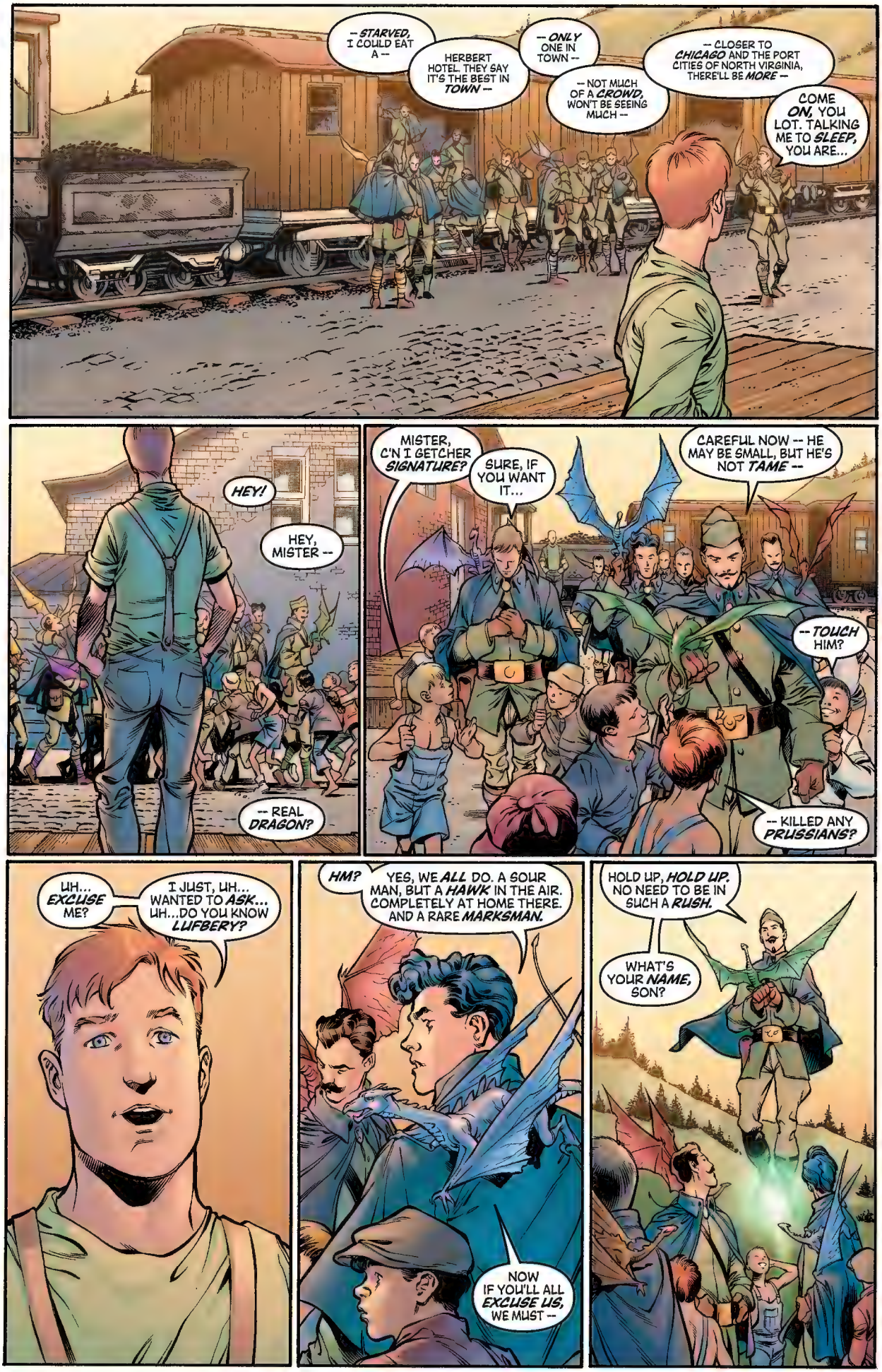
OH, BOY!
LOOK AT 'EM GO! LOOK AT 'EM!
THEY'RE SO... THEY'RE...
GOSH...

QUITE A SIGHT, ISN'T IT?
THESE ARE THE BRAVE YOUNG MEN OF THE OVERSEAS AERO CORPS, ACADIANS -- AND COLUMBIANS LIKE YOURSELVES.
ONLY A MONTH AGO, THEY WERE AT THE FRONT, HOLDING BACK THE PRUSSIAN MENACE IN GALLIA AND LOTHARINGIA. SOON, THEY'LL RETURN. AND THEIR COMRADES ARE STILL THERE --

-- PITTING THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR MAGICAL SKILL AND THEIR COURAGEOUS HEARTS AGAINST THE EVIL THAT THREATENS TO CONSUME EUROPE!


BUT THESE BRAVE MEN CANNOT FIGHT *ALONE!*
ALL THEIR SKILL, ALL THEIR *DARING* -- IT COMES TO NOTHING WITHOUT THE *SUPPORT* TO KEEP FIGHTING!
THE UNITED STATES OF COLUMBIA IS NOT *IN* THE WAR, NOT YET --
-- BUT COLUMBIANS' *HEARTS* ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE --
-- AND THE O.A.C. DESPERATELY NEEDS YOUR *DONATIONS* -- OF FOOD, CLOTHING, MEDICAL SUPPLIES -- OR THE *MONEY* TO PURCHASE SUCH --


HELP TO
TAKE A HAND IN VICTORY!
WAKE UP Columbia!
FLETCH?
C'MON, FLETCHER, IT'S GETTING LATE. YOUR DAD'LL SKIN YOU ALIVE IF --
YOU GO ON AHEAD. I'LL CATCH UP IN A MINUTE.
YOU CALL THAT FLYING?
WHAT? YOU RUSHED THE FORMATION, THEO --
NOW, NOW, DON'T PUT IT ON ME THAT YOU CAN'T KEEP UP --
HM?


-- STARVED, I COULD EAT A --
HERBERT HOTEL. THEY SAY IT'S THE BEST IN TOWN --
-- ONLY ONE IN TOWN --
-- NOT MUCH OF A CROWD, WON'T BE SEEING MUCH --
-- CLOSER TO CHICAGO AND THE PORT CITIES OF NORTH VIRGINIA, THERE'LL BE MORE --
COME ON, YOU LOT. TALKING ME TO SLEEP, YOU ARE...
HEY!
HEY, MISTER --
-- REAL DRAGON?
MISTER, C'N I GETCHER SIGNATURE?
SURE, IF YOU WANT IT...
CAREFUL NOW -- HE MAY BE SMALL, BUT HE'S NOT TAME --
-- TOUCH HIM?
-- KILLED ANY PRUSSIANS?
UH... EXCUSE ME?
I JUST, UH... WANTED TO ASK... UH...DO YOU KNOW LUFBERY?
HM?
YES, WE ALL DO. A SOUR MAN, BUT A HAWK IN THE AIR. COMPLETELY AT HOME THERE. AND A RARE MARKSMAN.
NOW IF YOU'LL ALL EXCUSE US, WE MUST --
HOLD UP, HOLD UP. NO NEED TO BE IN SUCH A RUSH.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, SON?

UH, FLETCHER. FLETCHER ARROWSMITH, SIR.
AND YOU'VE HEARD OF LUFBERY. ARE YOU QUICK? GOOD EYESIGHT, GOOD AT CATCH?
I... I GUESS SO. SIR.
WHAT'S THIS, BONNIE?
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THE GAULS NEED HELP, SON. THEY DESPERATELY NEED MEN, PARTICULARLY AIRMEN. THE PRUSSIANS DO HORRIBLE THINGS --
-- RAPE, MURDER --
-- THEY USE THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN IN THEIR NECROMANCIES --
BONNIE, CUT IT OUT. HE'S JUST A KID.
HE DOESN'T WANT THIS, HE'S NOT READY. RECRUIT SOMEONE ELSE.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
WE TRAIN QUALIFIED CANDIDATES, FLETCHER ARROWSMITH -- TEACH THEM THE MAGIC SPELLS THAT LET THEM FLY.
THINK ABOUT IT. MAYBE LOOK US UP IN A COUPLE OF YEARS.
AND TELL YOUR PARENTS -- WE'D APPRECIATE THEIR DONATIONS!

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED, FLETCHER? JUST TO *STAND* HERE?

THEY'RE *IN* THERE, JONATHAN. MAYBE SITTING DOWN TO DINNER *RIGHT NOW.*

THE WAY THEY FLEW -- THE *GRACE* OF IT, THE SKILL --

I'M JUST A *KID* -- A SMALL-TOWN KID WHO'LL NEVER BE *ANYTHING* MUCH -- JUST ONE MORE NOBODY WHO'LL NEVER *MATTER* IN THE WORLD --

BUT THEM -- THEY'RE -- *THEY'RE* --

Hard Goods & Men's Furnishings

Herbertsville Grocers

Practical Sorceries

HOTEL

MY PA SAYS MAYBE I CAN *JOIN UP* -- IN OCTOBER, WHEN I'M *SIXTEEN.*

REALLY? HE'D REALLY *LET* YOU?

OH, IT'D BE *WONDERFUL* -- TO LEARN TO *FLY* LIKE THAT --

HA! DON'T EVEN *BOTHER,* FLETCH -- YOUR DAD WOULD *NEVER* ALLOW IT. HE'LL KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE *GROUND,* YOU'LL SEE.

WHY, IF HE KNEW YOU'D EVEN *SPOKEN* TO WINIFRED HERE...

ENOUGH, JONATHAN. DON'T RUB IT IN.

COME ON, WINNIE. I'LL WALK YOU *HOME.*

MAYBE YOUR FATHER COULD *TEACH* FLETCHER. I CAN SEE HIM NOW, LUMBERING OVER THE TREES LIKE A *DRAFT HORSE...*

HA!

BLACKSMITH

Martin Arrowsmith • Proprietor

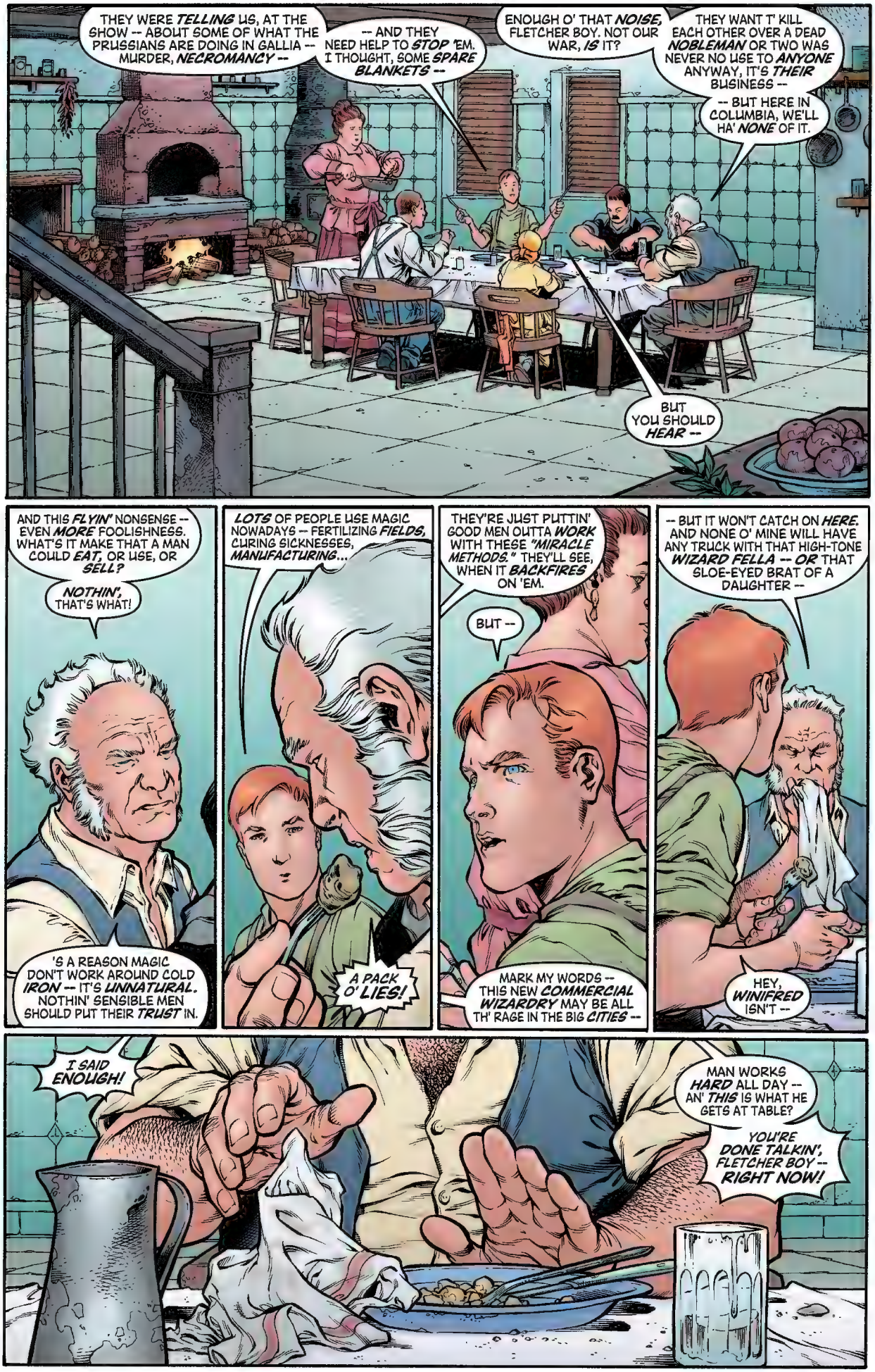
WHERE'VE Y'*BEEN* ALL THIS TIME, BOY? YOU WERE SENT T' GET MORE *LEAD SOLDER!*

I HAVE IT *WITH* ME, DAD. I JUST STOPPED TO WATCH THE AIR SHOW...

VLETCH-BOY!

HMPH.

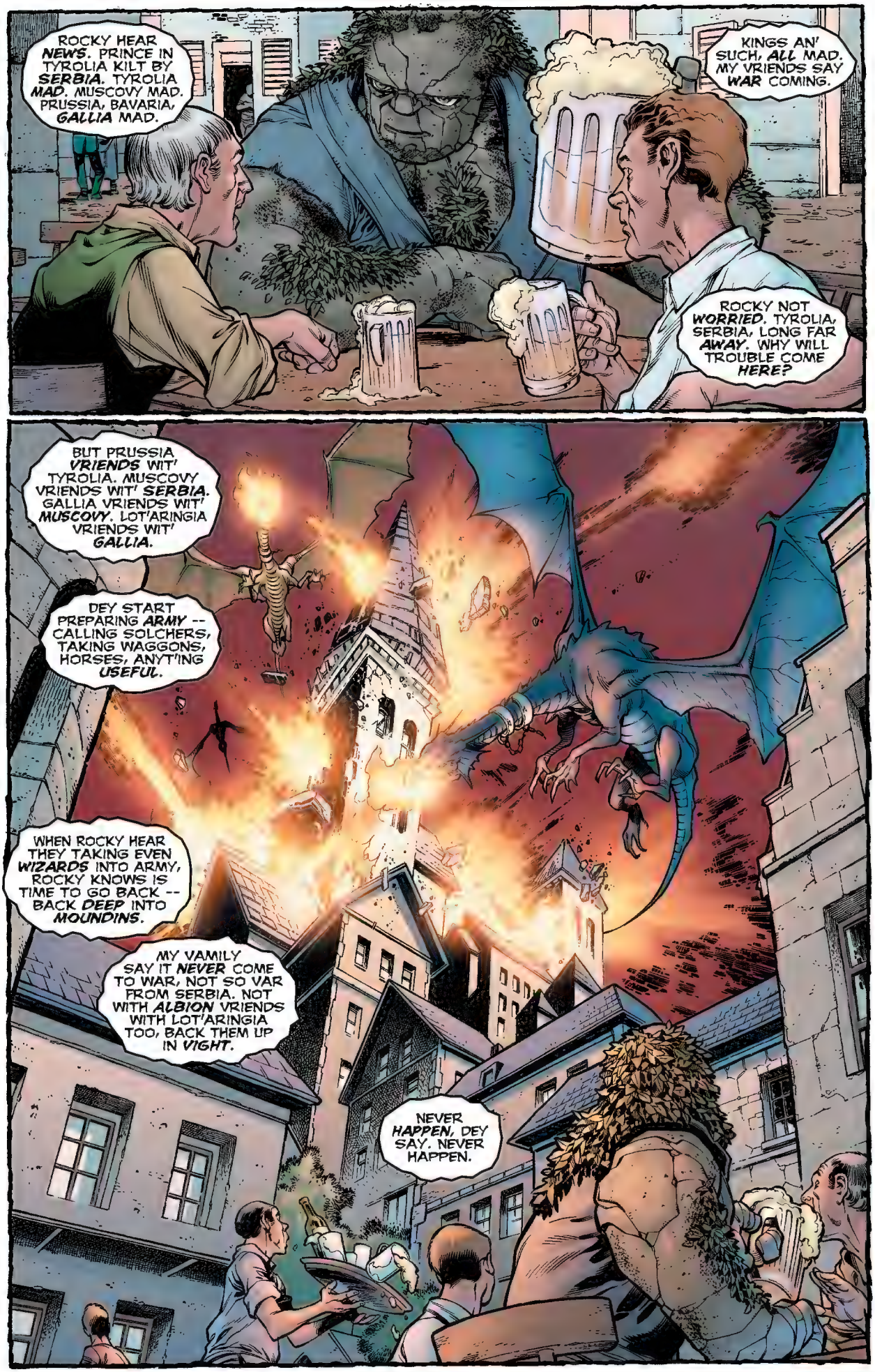
IDIOT *FOOLISHNESS.* SHOULDN'T HAVE WASTED Y'R *TIME...*

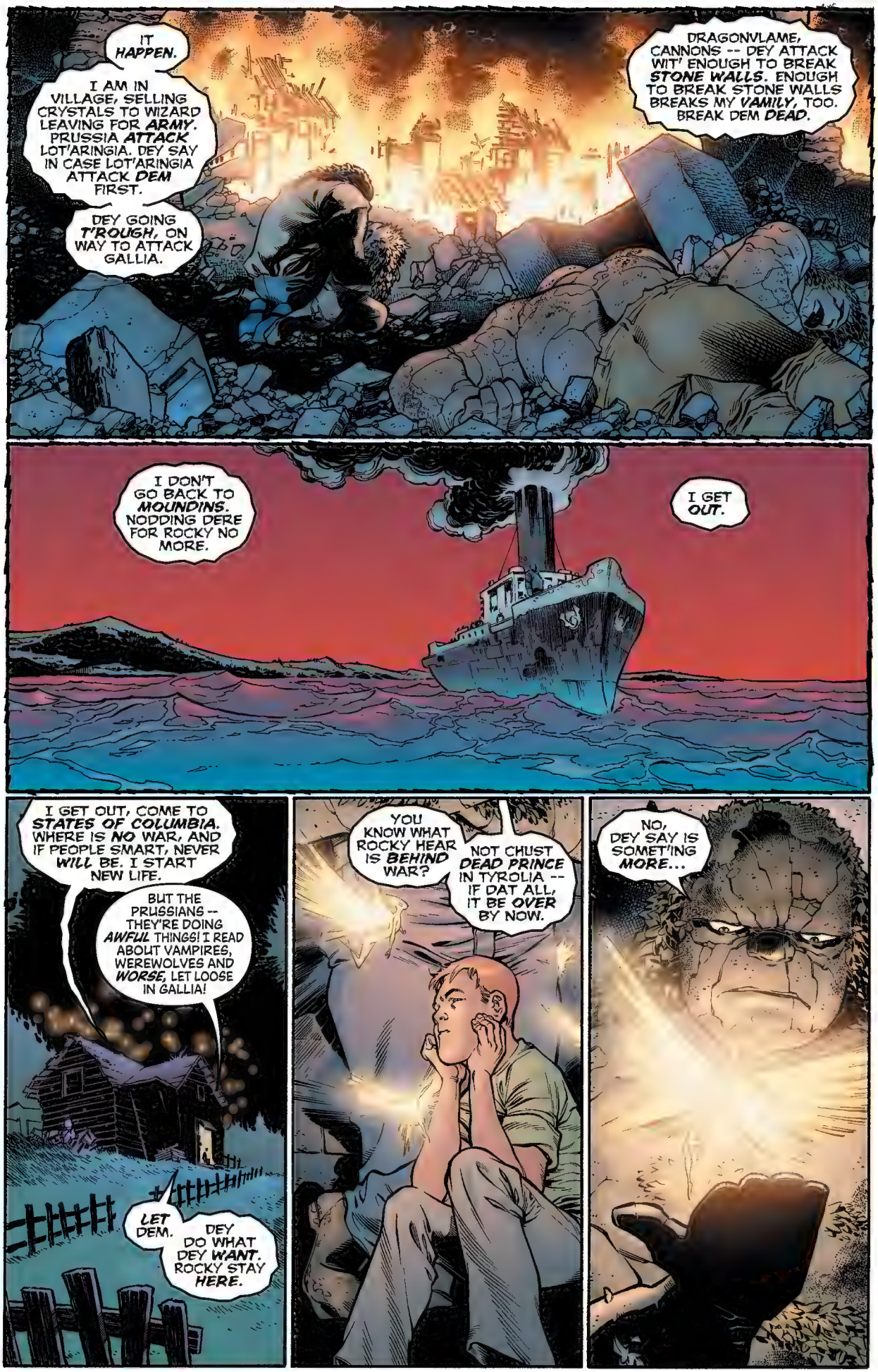

THEY WERE *TELLING* US, AT THE SHOW -- ABOUT SOME OF WHAT THE PRUSSIANS ARE DOING IN GALLIA -- MURDER, *NECROMANCY* --
-- AND THEY NEED HELP TO *STOP* 'EM. I THOUGHT, SOME *SPARE BLANKETS* --
ENOUGH O' THAT *NOISE*, FLETCHER BOY. NOT OUR WAR, *IS* IT?
THEY WANT T' KILL EACH OTHER OVER A DEAD *NOBLEMAN* OR TWO WAS NEVER NO USE TO *ANYONE* ANYWAY, IT'S *THEIR* BUSINESS --
-- BUT HERE IN COLUMBIA, WE'LL HA' *NONE* OF IT.
BUT YOU SHOULD *HEAR* --
AND THIS *FLYIN'* NONSENSE -- EVEN *MORE* FOOLISHNESS. WHAT'S IT MAKE THAT A MAN COULD *EAT*, OR USE, OR *SELL*?
NOTHIN', THAT'S WHAT!
'S A REASON MAGIC DON'T WORK AROUND COLD *IRON* -- IT'S *UNNATURAL*. NOTHIN' SENSIBLE MEN SHOULD PUT THEIR *TRUST* IN.
LOTS OF PEOPLE USE MAGIC NOWADAYS -- FERTILIZING *FIELDS*, CURING SICKNESSES, *MANUFACTURING*...
A PACK O' LIES!
THEY'RE JUST PUTTIN' GOOD MEN OUTTA *WORK* WITH THESE *"MIRACLE METHODS."* THEY'LL SEE, WHEN IT *BACKFIRES* ON 'EM.
BUT --
MARK MY WORDS -- THIS NEW *COMMERCIAL WIZARDRY* MAY BE ALL TH' RAGE IN THE BIG *CITIES* --
-- BUT IT WON'T CATCH ON *HERE*. AND NONE O' MINE WILL HAVE ANY TRUCK WITH THAT HIGH-TONE *WIZARD FELLA -- OR* THAT SLOE-EYED BRAT OF A DAUGHTER --
HEY, *WINIFRED* ISN'T --
I SAID ENOUGH!
MAN WORKS *HARD* ALL DAY -- AN' *THIS* IS WHAT HE GETS AT TABLE?
YOU'RE DONE TALKIN', FLETCHER BOY -- RIGHT NOW!

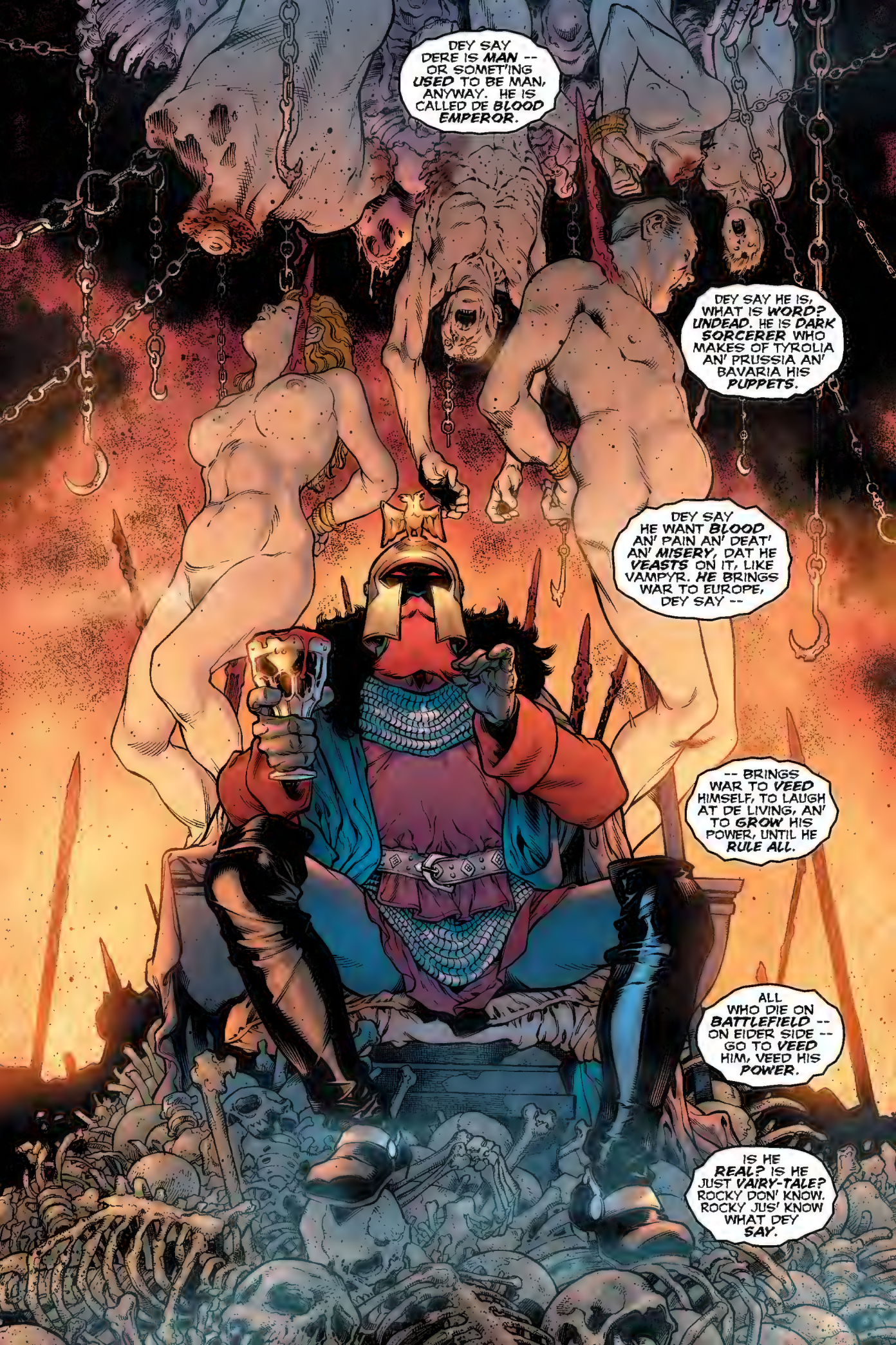
SULKING, FLETCH?
Y'KNOW, I SAW A PART OF THE SHOW, UP WHEN THEY CRESTED THE HILL. IT WAS SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT.
AND DON'T PAY TOO MUCH MIND TO DAD --
-- THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, THE STATES'LL GET INTO THE WAR EVENTUALLY, JUST WAIT.
WE'LL BE IN IT, YOU'LL SEE.
YOU REALLY THINK SO, MARTY?
WELL, MAYBE NOT YOU.
I'LL BE IN IT, THERE'LL BE TIME FOR THAT. BUT THERE'S NO WAY IT'LL LAST LONG ENOUGH FOR A KID YOUR AGE...
DON'T SIT OUT TOO LATE. MOM'LL WORRY.

SPRITES...
IF HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS EVENING RITUALS...
UH...
HO DERE, VLETCH-BOY!
WHAT YOU NEED VROM ROCKY, ANH?

I, AH...IF YOU'RE BUSY, MR. RAKH -- RAKHMATA --
HAH -- MY REAL NAME IS NOT FOR HUMIN T'ROATS. CHUST CALL ME ROCKY.
YOU NEED LIFTING SUMPING HEAVY?
NO, I -- ROCKY, YOU WERE OVER IN EUROPE WHEN THE FIGHTING STARTED. YOU'VE BEEN HERE LESS THAN A YEAR.
WHAT -- WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
DE WAR?
WAS BAD.
TRUSS ME, VER' BAD. DASS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.
BAD.
NO, I --
YOU SAW IT, ROCKY. YOU CAN TELL ME. IS IT LIKE EVERYONE SAYS, OR...?
OGAY, OGAY.
YOU REALLY WAN' TO KNOW, ROCKY TELL YOU.
SIT, SIT.
MY PEOPLES -- DE ROCK-TROLLS -- WE ORIGINALLY VROM INSIDE DE VAALSERBERG MOUNDIN, IN LOT'ARINGIA.
BUT SINZ DE PEACE OF CHARLEMAGNE, WE HAVE MORE AN' MORE TO DO WIT' DE VLESHMEN -- DE HUMINS -- AN' WE LIVE MORE OUDSIDE.
MY VAMILY, WE TRADE WIT' HUMINS, DIG CRYSTALS DE WIZARDS LIKE FOR SPELLS.
WORK IN VIELDS SOME, TOO -- HELP OUT VARMERS.

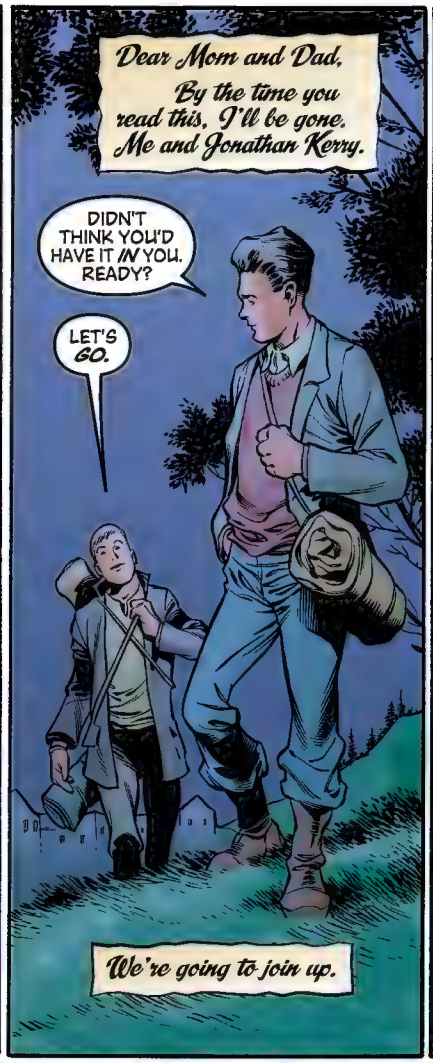

ROCKY HEAR NEWS. PRINCE IN TYROLIA KILT BY SERBIA. TYROLIA MAD. MUSCOVY MAD. PRUSSIA, BAVARIA, GALLIA MAD.
KINGS AN' SUCH, ALL MAD. MY VRIENDS SAY WAR COMING.
ROCKY NOT WORRIED. TYROLIA, SERBIA, LONG FAR AWAY. WHY WILL TROUBLE COME HERE?
BUT PRUSSIA VRIENDS WIT' TYROLIA. MUSCOVY VRIENDS WIT' SERBIA. GALLIA VRIENDS WIT' MUSCOVY. LOT'ARINGIA VRIENDS WIT' GALLIA.
DEY START PREPARING ARMY -- CALLING SOLCHERS, TAKING WAGGONS, HORSES, ANYT'ING USEFUL.
WHEN ROCKY HEAR THEY TAKING EVEN WIZARDS INTO ARMY, ROCKY KNOWS IS TIME TO GO BACK -- BACK DEEP INTO MOUNDINS.
MY VAMILY SAY IT NEVER COME TO WAR, NOT SO VAR FROM SERBIA. NOT WITH ALBION VRIENDS WITH LOT'ARINGIA TOO, BACK THEM UP IN VIGHT.
NEVER HAPPEN, DEY SAY. NEVER HAPPEN.

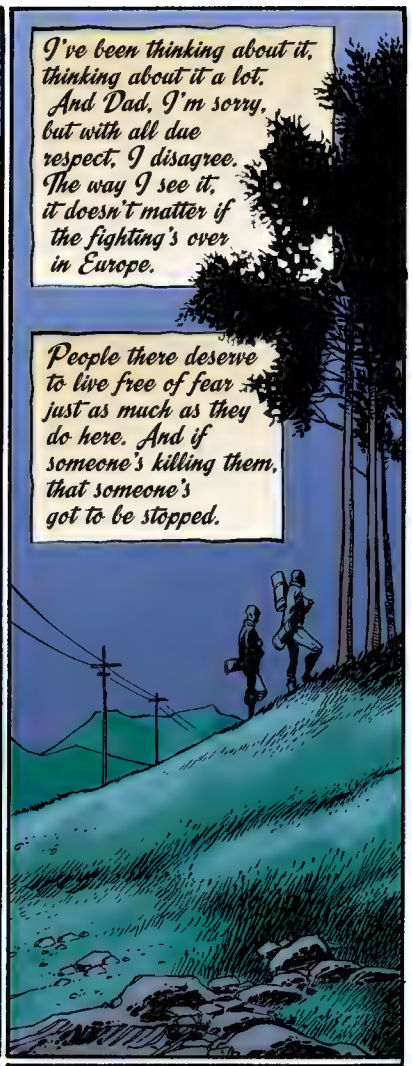

IT HAPPEN.
I AM IN VILLAGE, SELLING CRYSTALS TO WIZARD LEAVING FOR ARMY. PRUSSIA ATTACK LOT'ARINGIA. DEY SAY IN CASE LOT'ARINGIA ATTACK DEM FIRST.
DEY GOING T'ROUGH, ON WAY TO ATTACK GALLIA.
DRAGONVLAME, CANNONS -- DEY ATTACK WIT' ENOUGH TO BREAK STONE WALLS. ENOUGH TO BREAK STONE WALLS BREAKS MY VAMILY, TOO. BREAK DEM DEAD.
I DON'T GO BACK TO MOUNDINS. NODDING DERE FOR ROCKY NO MORE.
I GET OUT.
I GET OUT, COME TO STATES OF COLUMBIA. WHERE IS NO WAR, AND IF PEOPLE SMART, NEVER WILL BE. I START NEW LIFE.
BUT THE PRUSSIANS -- THEY'RE DOING AWFUL THINGS! I READ ABOUT VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES AND WORSE, LET LOOSE IN GALLIA!
LET DEM.
DEY DO WHAT DEY WANT. ROCKY STAY HERE.
YOU KNOW WHAT ROCKY HEAR IS BEHIND WAR?
NOT CHUST DEAD PRINCE IN TYROLIA -- IF DAT ALL, IT BE OVER BY NOW.
NO, DEY SAY IS SOMET'ING MORE...


DEY SAY DERE IS MAN -- OR SOMET'ING USED TO BE MAN, ANYWAY. HE IS CALLED DE BLOOD EMPEROR.
DEY SAY HE IS, WHAT IS WORD? UNDEAD. HE IS DARK SORCERER WHO MAKES OF TYROLIA AN' PRUSSIA AN' BAVARIA HIS PUPPETS.
DEY SAY HE WANT BLOOD AN' PAIN AN' DEAT' AN' MISERY, DAT HE VEASTS ON IT, LIKE VAMPYR. HE BRINGS WAR TO EUROPE, DEY SAY --
-- BRINGS WAR TO VEED HIMSELF, TO LAUGH AT DE LIVING, AN' TO GROW HIS POWER, UNTIL HE RULE ALL.
ALL WHO DIE ON BATTLEFIELD -- ON EIDER SIDE -- GO TO VEED HIM, VEED HIS POWER.
IS HE REAL? IS HE JUST VAIRY-TALE? ROCKY DON' KNOW. ROCKY JUS' KNOW WHAT DEY SAY.

BUT IF EUROPE BELONG TO DIS EMPEROR OF BLOOD, DEN ME, ROCKY, I STAY IN NEW WORLD.
BUT IF HE DOES EXIST -- OR EVEN IF HE DOESN'T -- THEN THIS HAS TO BE STOPPED, DOESN'T IT?
GOOD MEN HAVE TO STAND AGAINST EVIL, AND END IT!
HOW CAN YOU -- HOW CAN YOU JUST LET YOUR FAMILY BE KILLED LIKE THAT, PRACTICALLY IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES, AND IGNORE IT --
-- LET THE BUTCHERS WHO DID IT ROAM FREE?
NO. ROCKY GOT T'INGS TO DO. GOT LONG DAY TOMORROW.
ROCKY GOT TO GO SLEEP, AND SO DOES VLETCH-BOY.
HUH?
ROCKY, I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO --
-- I WASN'T THINKING --
-- I --
KLATCH

KTAK
TAK
HUH?
FLETCH --?


Dear Mom and Dad,
By the time you read this, I'll be gone. Me and Jonathan Kerry.
DIDN'T THINK YOU'D HAVE IT IN YOU. READY?
LET'S GO.
We're going to join up.


I've been thinking about it, thinking about it a lot. And Dad, I'm sorry, but with all due respect, I disagree. The way I see it, it doesn't matter if the fighting's over in Europe.
People there deserve to live free of fear just as much as they do here. And if someone's killing them, that someone's got to be stopped.

The Overseas Aero Corps will teach me to fly, teach me magic, and I'll be able to go over there —
— to go and fight for a good cause.

I'll write when I'm settled, and I'll get Jonathan to write his folks, too. In the meantime, don't worry about either of us.
We'll be fine, trust me. And we'll be doing something worth doing.

Your loving son,
Fletcher
THIS IS GREAT, ISN'T IT? THIS IS REALLY GREAT.
WE'RE NOT BOYS ANY MORE. WE'RE MEN NOW. DOING SOMETHING WITH OUR LIVES.
YEAH...
THAT'S THE PART THAT MAKES IT FEEL RIGHT, THAT MADE UP MY MIND. LEARNING TO FLY, THAT'LL BE WONDERFUL, BUT WE'RE NOT DOING THIS FOR THE FUN OF IT.
WE'RE DOING THIS BECAUSE IT NEEDS TO BE DONE. WE'RE GOING TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING — GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.
WE'RE GOING TO MATTER.

CHAPTER TWO

On the Sidewalks of New York

New York City.
May 1915

Dear Mom and Dad,

You should see Manhattan Island.
You really should.

The size of it is just the start.
All Herbertsville could be tucked in one corner and forgotten, lost among the towers of brick and stone.

But that's just a part of it.

It's the life of it, the vitality.
The constant noise, the smells of Italian spices and a hundred things I couldn't guess at.

And magic. I swear you can smell the magic.

The people never slow down, doing business day and night, it seems, faces from all around the world, all walks of life.

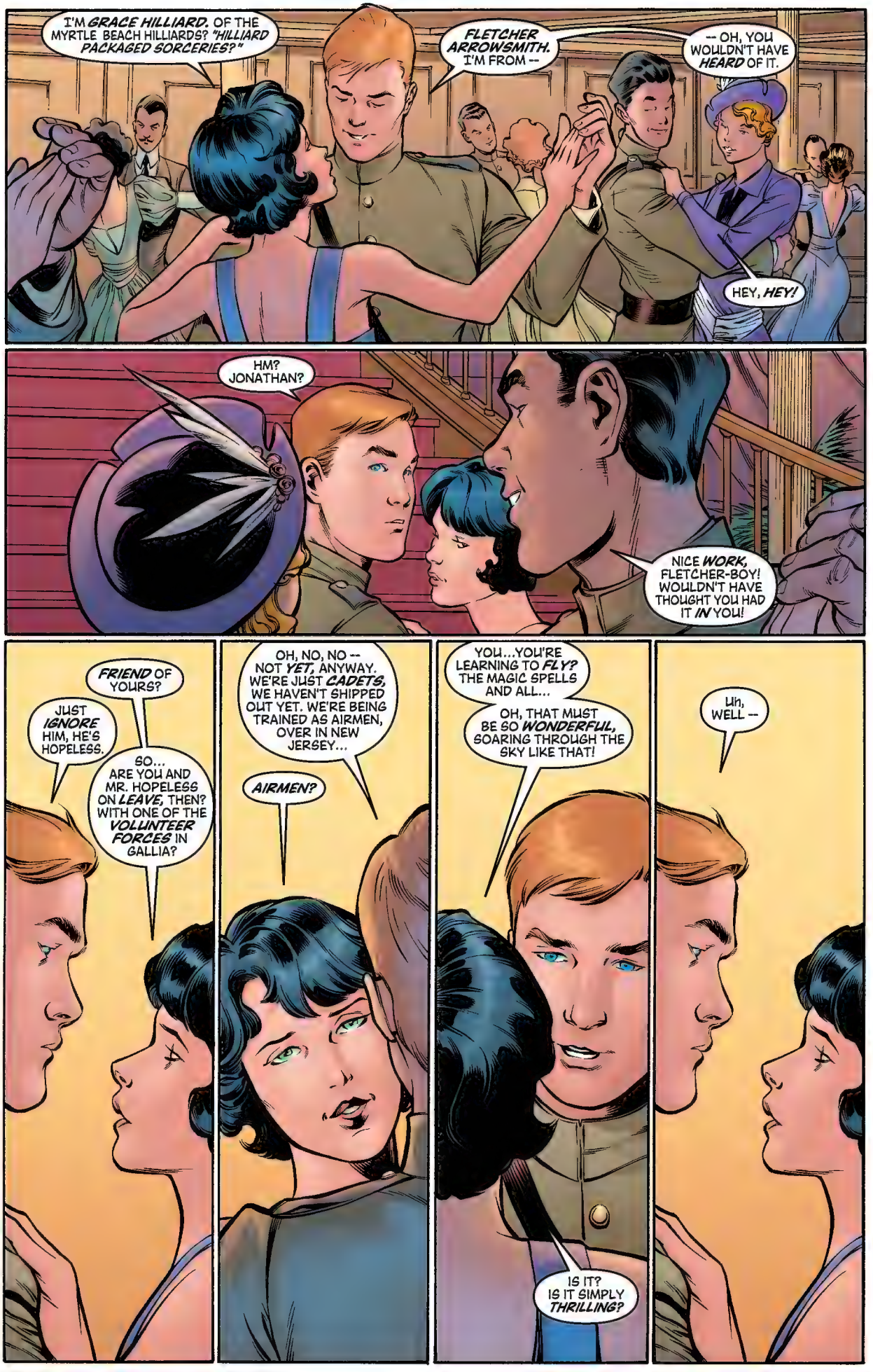
HOT
Roasted Peanuts
5 A LARGE BAG

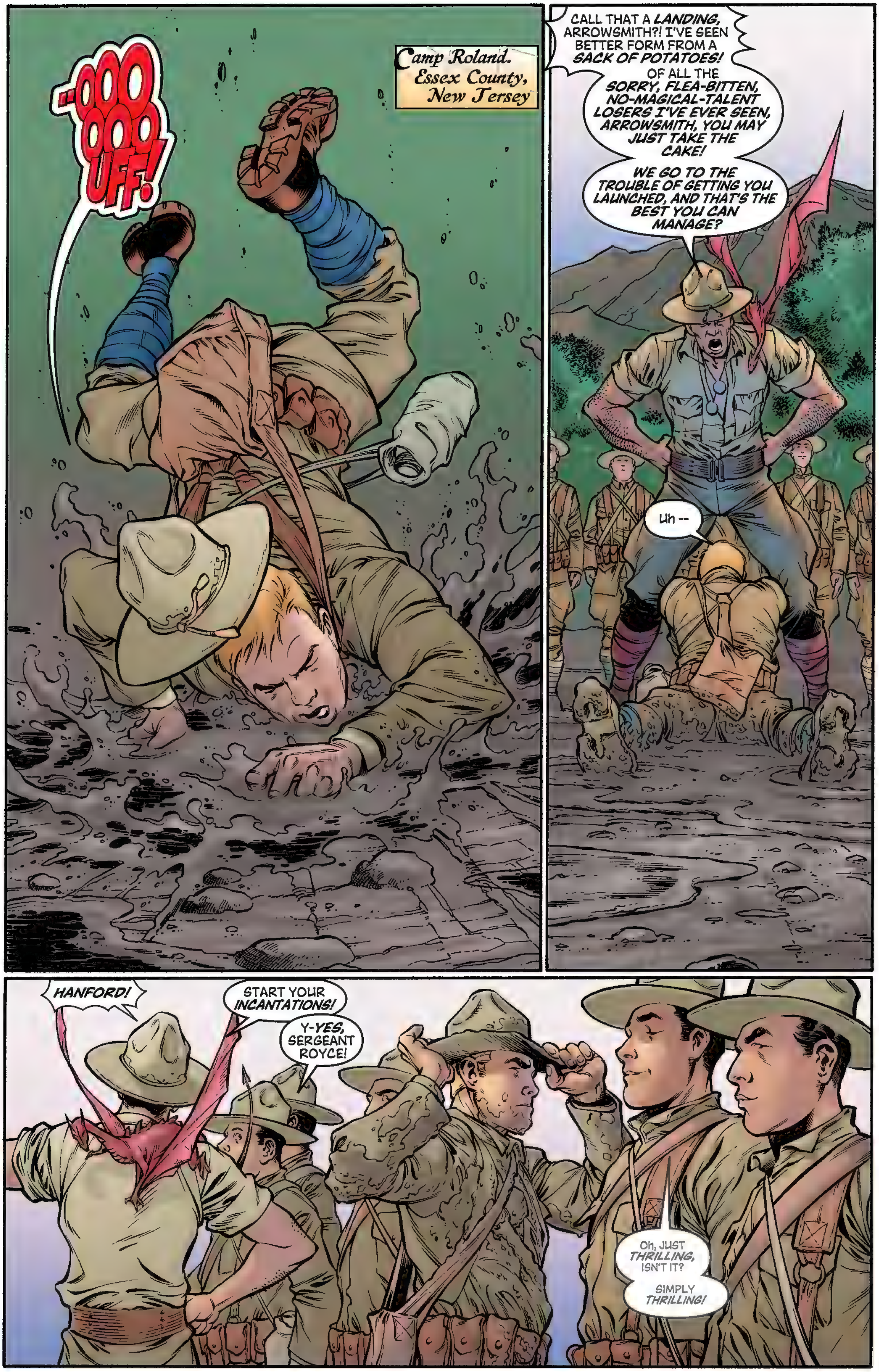
And the creatures!
If you thought Rocky turned heads when he first came into town, a troll from Lotharingia...

RADEGAST St.
BRICK St

...why, here no one would even blink...
'S FAULTY WORKM'NSHIP, NN. DUG WRONG...
THE HELL! POOR MATERIALS, IT IS! BACK IN THE AULD COUNTRY, PIPES LIKE THIS'N BE GOOD A THOUSAND YEAR AN' MORE!
BUT A HUMAN KNOWS NAE MORE ABOOT GOOD CLAY THAN A STINKIN' RIVER TROLL KNOWS ABOOT --
NAH, NAH. DWARF WATCH MOUTH, DWARF NOT EAT HIM TEETHS, HM?
AH, AN' LOOK WHO'S TRY'NA TALK NOW, HM? I'LL TELL YOU --
AWFUL, AREN'T THEY? IGNORANT HUNKIES, MY PAPA SAYS, FROM THE FOULEST PARTS OF POLONIA AND HIBERNIA AND WORSE.
HM? I DON'T --
BARELY SMART ENOUGH TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS, MY PAPA SAYS --
-- BUT AT LEAST THEY'RE AS STRONG AS THEY ARE STUPID.
IT'S A CRIME THEY GET TO LIVE ALONGSIDE REAL PEOPLE --
-- BUT SOMEONE'S GOT TO DIG THE SEWERS AND THE TUNNELS, I SUPPOSE, OR AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT PAPA SAYS.
I, AH --
BUT ENOUGH ABOUT THEM. HORRID THINGS.
ISN'T IT LOVELY MRS. RITT THROWS THESE SOIREES FOR THE YOUNG MEN IN UNIFORM --
-- SO THEY CAN MEET REPUTABLE PERSONS THEIR OWN AGE, EVEN FAR FROM HOME?
SO A YOUNG MAN COULD TALK TO A GIRL, OR ASK HER TO DANCE, OR --
ER, WELL --

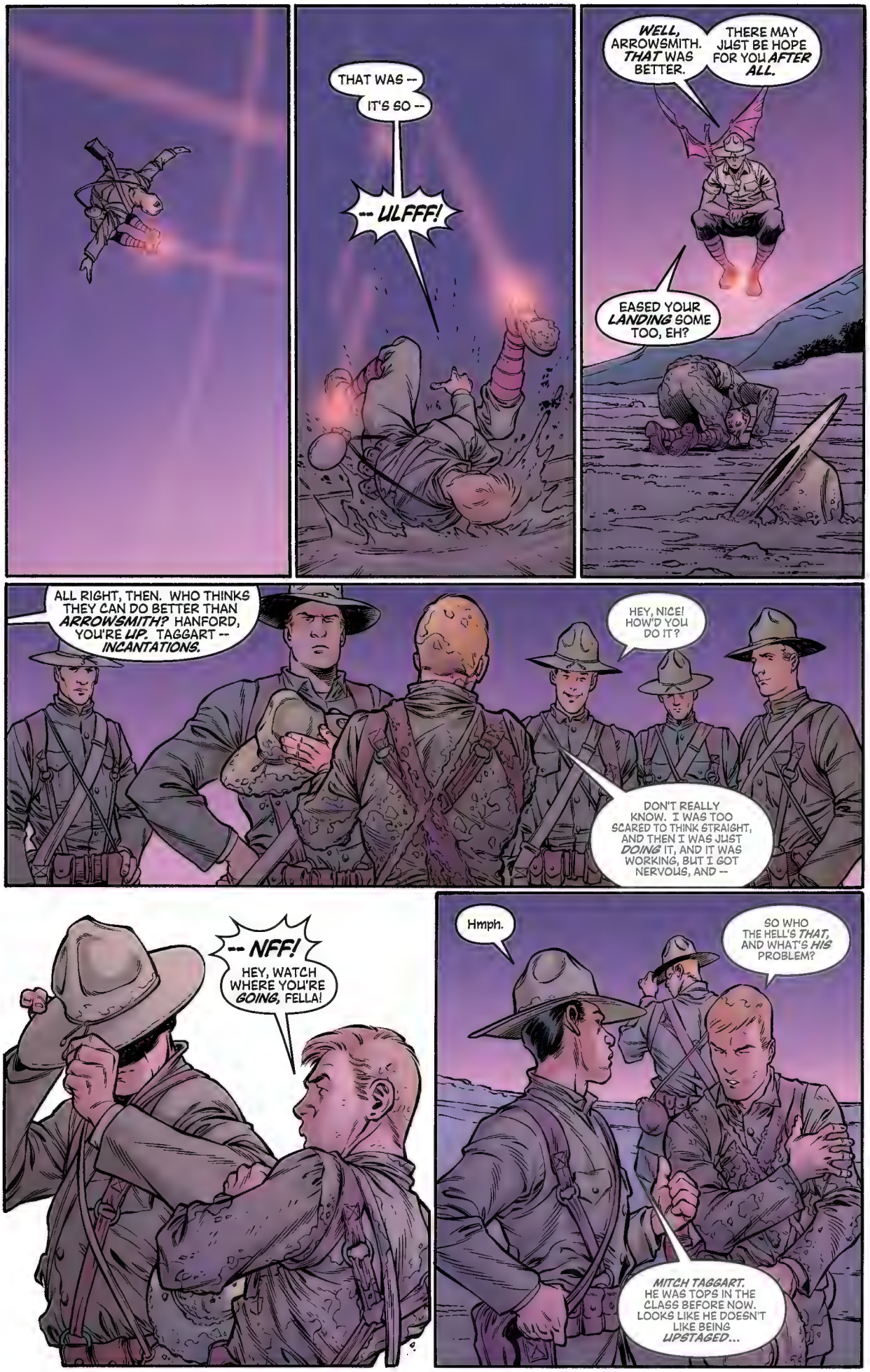
PARDON ME --
-- BUT I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THAT DANCE YOU PROMISED ME -- !
WHAT? BUT --
UH --
SORRY, BINNIE -- YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. MUSIC'S STARTING...
I, AH, I -- THANK YOU, I THINK --
BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'VE MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEONE EL --
OH, YOU JUST LOOKED LIKE YOU NEEDED RESCUING. SHE'S A DEAR, BUT SHE CAN BE A LITTLE MUCH.
I THINK I'M JUST NOT USED TO THIS. I, AH, GUESS YOU'LL WANT TO BE GOING BACK TO WHATEVER YOU WERE --
WHAT, I SAVE YOU FROM BINNIE ATHERTON, AND I DON'T EVEN GET A DANCE OUT OF IT?
DO YOU INTEND TO MAKE A LIAR OUT OF ME, SIR?
I -- NO, NO, OF COURSE NOT!
SHALL WE?
DELIGHTED.


I'M GRACE HILLIARD. OF THE MYRTLE BEACH HILLIARDS? "HILLIARD PACKAGED SORCERIES?"
FLETCHER ARROWSMITH. I'M FROM --
-- OH, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE HEARD OF IT.
HEY, HEY!
HM? JONATHAN?
NICE WORK, FLETCHER-BOY! WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT YOU HAD IT IN YOU!
FRIEND OF YOURS?
JUST IGNORE HIM, HE'S HOPELESS.
SO... ARE YOU AND MR. HOPELESS ON LEAVE, THEN? WITH ONE OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCES IN GALLIA?
OH, NO, NO -- NOT YET, ANYWAY. WE'RE JUST CADETS, WE HAVEN'T SHIPPED OUT YET. WE'RE BEING TRAINED AS AIRMEN, OVER IN NEW JERSEY...
AIRMEN?
YOU...YOU'RE LEARNING TO FLY? THE MAGIC SPELLS AND ALL...
OH, THAT MUST BE SO WONDERFUL, SOARING THROUGH THE SKY LIKE THAT!
IS IT? IS IT SIMPLY THRILLING?
Uh, WELL --

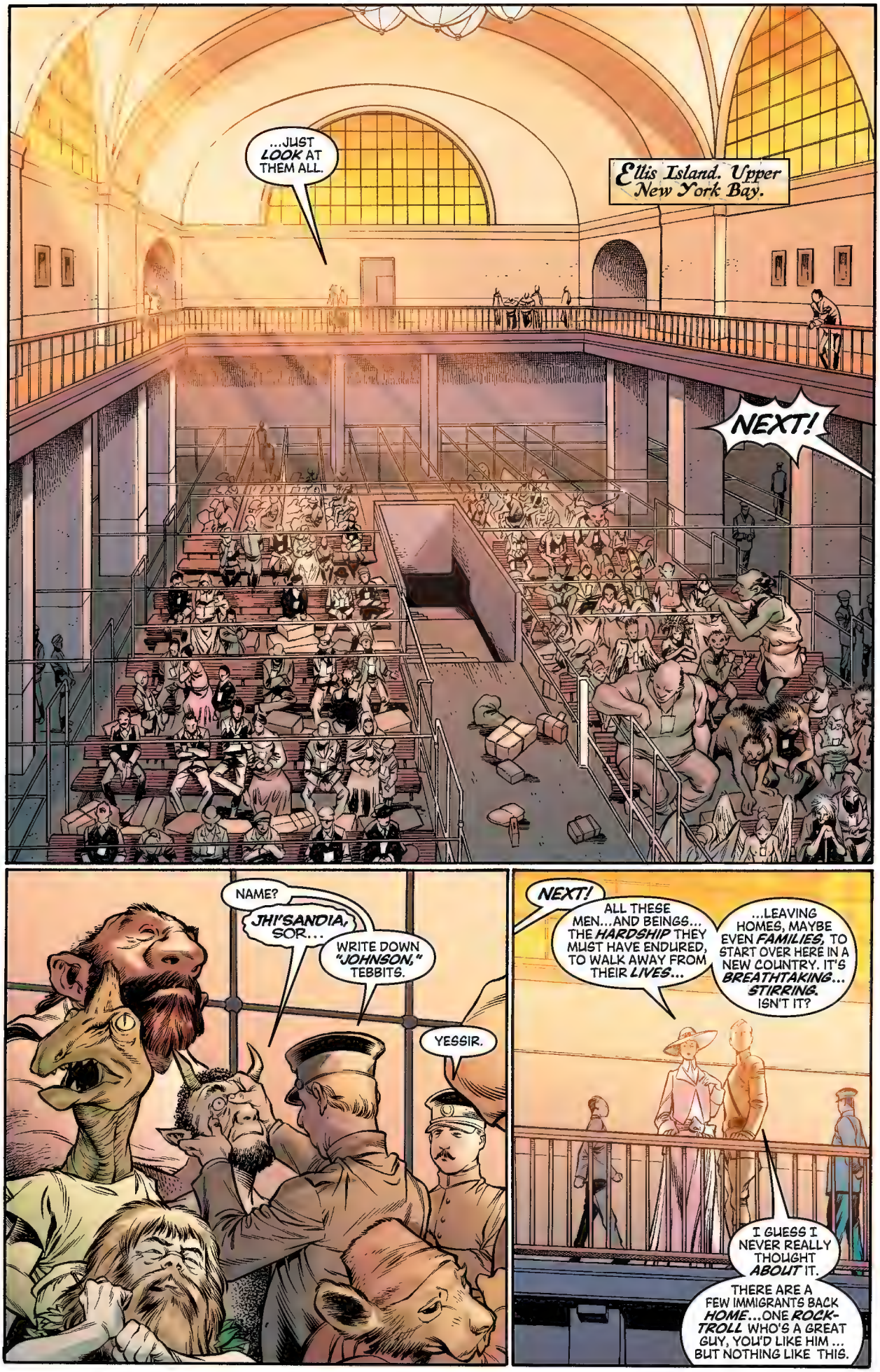


-OOO OOO UFF!
Camp Roland. Essex County, New Jersey
CALL THAT A LANDING, ARROWSMITH?! I'VE SEEN BETTER FORM FROM A SACK OF POTATOES!
OF ALL THE SORRY, FLEA-BITTEN, NO-MAGICAL-TALENT LOSERS I'VE EVER SEEN, ARROWSMITH, YOU MAY JUST TAKE THE CAKE!
WE GO TO THE TROUBLE OF GETTING YOU LAUNCHED, AND THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN MANAGE?
Uh --
HANFORD!
START YOUR INCANTATIONS!
Y-YES, SERGEANT ROYCE!
Oh, JUST THRILLING, ISN'T IT?
SIMPLY THRILLING!

ARROWSMITH!
DID I SAY I WAS FINISHED WITH YOU?
Uh, N-NO, SERGEANT
SEE THIS? PURE ORICHALC. HOLDS THE SPELL THAT TRANSFERS THE POWER OF FLIGHT FROM THE DRAGONET TO YOU.
HARD TO FIND, IMPOSSIBLE TO MINE...
...WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE IT ON IDIOTS WHO CAN'T USE IT. YOURS ISN'T BROKEN, IT'S CHARGED...
YOU'VE JUST GOT TO DO LIKE WE TELL YOU. EASY AS PIE.
I, Uh, THOUGHT I WAS DOING --
YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD, KID. STOP THINKING SO MUCH.
RELAX INTO IT. LET THE SPELL TAKE YOU.
SEE?
Uhp -- !
DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. JUST FEEL IT. FEEL IT, AND --
I, uh --
I --


THAT WAS --
IT'S SO --
-- ULFFF!
WELL, ARROWSMITH. THAT WAS BETTER.
THERE MAY JUST BE HOPE FOR YOU AFTER ALL.
EASED YOUR LANDING SOME TOO, EH?
ALL RIGHT, THEN. WHO THINKS THEY CAN DO BETTER THAN ARROWSMITH? HANFORD, YOU'RE UP. TAGGART -- INCANTATIONS.
HEY, NICE! HOW'D YOU DO IT?
DON'T REALLY KNOW. I WAS TOO SCARED TO THINK STRAIGHT, AND THEN I WAS JUST DOING IT, AND IT WAS WORKING, BUT I GOT NERVOUS, AND --
-- NFF!
HEY, WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, FELLA!
Hmph.
SO WHO THE HELL'S THAT, AND WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?
MITCH TAGGART. HE WAS TOPS IN THE CLASS BEFORE NOW. LOOKS LIKE HE DOESN'T LIKE BEING UPSTAGED...

Dear Marty,
Dad's still not letting you go? Too bad.
They work us pretty hard here. All the spell groups just for flying — I can only wonder what full wizards go through!
AND TO COUNTER TURBULENCE OR STORMS...
Barracks life has its ups and downs...
S-SIR...I DIDN'T...
NO EXCUSES, ARROWSMITH! I EXPECT BETTER THAN THIS... THIS DISGRACEFUL SLOVENLINESS!
...but however tough it may be at times, it's worth anything to learn to fly!
TELL 'EM, CADET.
LEAN INTO IT, JONATHAN.
GET ON TOP OF IT, YOU'LL FEEL IT...
And the guys here are good eggs. Mostly.
HAW!
GUESS I DIDN'T SEE YOU, BROWN-NOSE!
I SWEAR... I'LL...
FLETCH, DON'T! YOU'VE GOT A WEEKEND PASS!
HE KNOWS YOU'LL LOSE IT IF YOU GET IN A FIGHT! JUST LET IT GO, LET IT GO...
But that's just training. There's more to your little brother than that. Why, just last weekend...
LOOK AT THEM, FLETCHER...

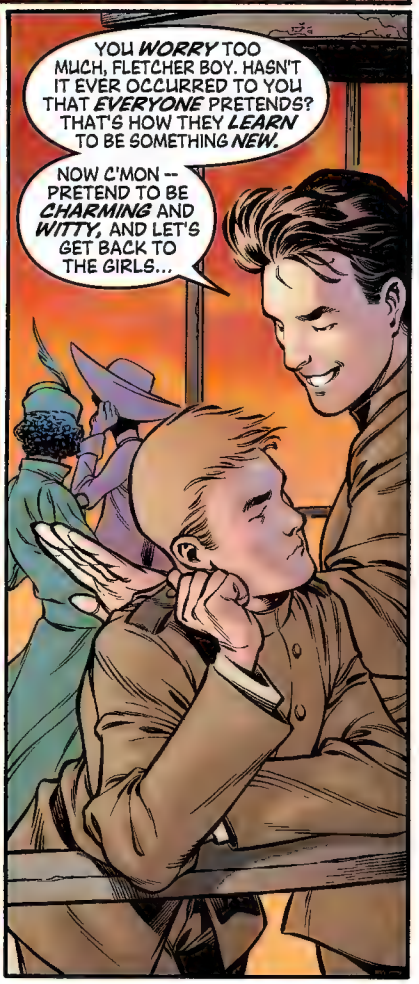

...JUST LOOK AT THEM ALL.
Ellis Island. Upper New York Bay.
NEXT!
NAME?
JHI'SANDIA, SOR...
WRITE DOWN "JOHNSON," TEBBITS.
YESSIR.
NEXT!
ALL THESE MEN...AND BEINGS... THE HARDSHIP THEY MUST HAVE ENDURED, TO WALK AWAY FROM THEIR LIVES...
...LEAVING HOMES, MAYBE EVEN FAMILIES, TO START OVER HERE IN A NEW COUNTRY. IT'S BREATHTAKING... STIRRING. ISN'T IT?
I GUESS I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
THERE ARE A FEW IMMIGRANTS BACK HOME...ONE ROCK-TROLL WHO'S A GREAT GUY, YOU'D LIKE HIM ... BUT NOTHING LIKE THIS.

I JUST LOOK AT THEM, AND I KNOW WHAT A SILLY, SPOILED, PAMPERED GIRL I AM.
I'M A HILLIARD. I GREW UP IN LUXURY, NEVER WANTED FOR ANYTHING. WE'RE SUCH CHILDREN OF PRIVILEGE, YOU AND I...
...AND THOSE POOR CREATURES DOWN THERE BEAR UP UNDER BURDENS WE CAN BARELY IMAGINE. DON'T YOU AGREE?
WELL, I... PRIVILEGE? I DON'T...
BUT THEY'VE HAD IT PRETTY TOUGH, YES. SOME OF THEM, LIKE ROCKY, WHAT THEY'VE SEEN OVER THERE...
IT'S HUMBLING. I FEEL USELESS, LIKE NOTHING I DO MATTERS.
I'VE BEEN PART OF CLOTHING DRIVES, FOOD DRIVES, BUT IT FEELS LIKE SO LITTLE. I CAN'T VOLUNTEER AS A SOLDIER, HELP END THE WAR...
...BUT SURELY I CAN DO MORE.
I'M SURE WHAT YOU'RE DOING HELPS. BUT I READ SOMEWHERE, ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN VOLUNTEERING AS NURSES, OR AS AMBULANCE DRIVERS...
REALLY?! DO YOU THINK... WELL, COULD YOU SEE ME DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I CAN BARELY SEE ME DOING THIS...
...BUT IT'S AT LEAST WORTH LOOKING INTO, DON'T YOU THINK?
I DO. I'LL LOOK INTO IT TOMORROW. MAYBE NOT A NURSE... I'M SURE THAT TAKES SPECIAL TRAINING, AND BESIDES, ALL THAT BLOOD...
...BUT I CAN DRIVE A MOTORCAR...
FLETCH! GRACE! CONSTANCE AND I WERE WONDERING WHERE YOU'D GOT TO!
YOU SHOULD HAVE COME OVER TO THE STATUE WITH US. THE VIEW FROM THE CROWN -- !
UNNERVING WHEN SHE SHIFTS POSITION, THOUGH...

I'M *IMPRESSED,* FLETCH.
THAT GRACE -- SHE'S A REAL *HONEY.* NOTHING LIKE THE GIRLS BACK IN *HERBERTSVILLE,* THAT'S FOR SURE.
I DON'T *KNOW.*
I MEAN, *YES,* SHE'S WONDERFUL. SMART AND PRETTY AND *HONEST* AND...AND...BUT I FEEL LIKE SUCH A *FRAUD.*

SHE'S A *MILLIONAIRE'S* DAUGHTER -- THE *UPPER* OF THE UPPER CRUST -- AND I'VE GOT *CHARCOAL* UNDER MY FINGERNAILS.
SHE THINKS I'M AN OFFICER AND A *GENTLEMAN...*
WELL, *AREN'T* YOU?
OR AT LEAST, AREN'T YOU *ABOUT* TO BE ONE?

MAYBE. BUT IT FEELS *FAKE,* LIKE I'M JUST PRETENDING. THE OTHERS, THEY SEEM LIKE THE *REAL THING,* MOSTLY...
...BUT I'M JUST TRYING TO REMEMBER NOT TO SAY *"GEE"* AND *"OH BOY"* ALL THE TIME, EXPOSING MYSELF AS A *SMALL-TOWN HICK.*
AND WHO SAYS IT'S NOT THE SAME FOR *EVERYONE ELSE,* HM?
HUH?


YOU *WORRY* TOO MUCH, FLETCHER BOY. HASN'T IT EVER OCCURRED TO YOU THAT *EVERYONE* PRETENDS? THAT'S HOW THEY *LEARN* TO BE SOMETHING *NEW.*
NOW C'MON -- PRETEND TO BE *CHARMING* AND *WITTY,* AND LET'S GET BACK TO THE GIRLS...

Dear Gretch,
Hey, sis. I soloed today.
Soloed!

That means I flew on my own. Totally on my own, in complete control!

I know Dad doesn't like to hear about this stuff, but I had to tell someone. You can show this to Mom and Marty.

The way it works is, the instructor — Sergeant Jackson — transfers a prana-charge to my orichalc chips, from his dragonet.

Like when we train, but a larger charge, and one that reacts only to my commands.

Then it was all up to me, from the launch spell on. I can't describe how it feels, but it's amazing — I'll have to take you up, when I'm home.

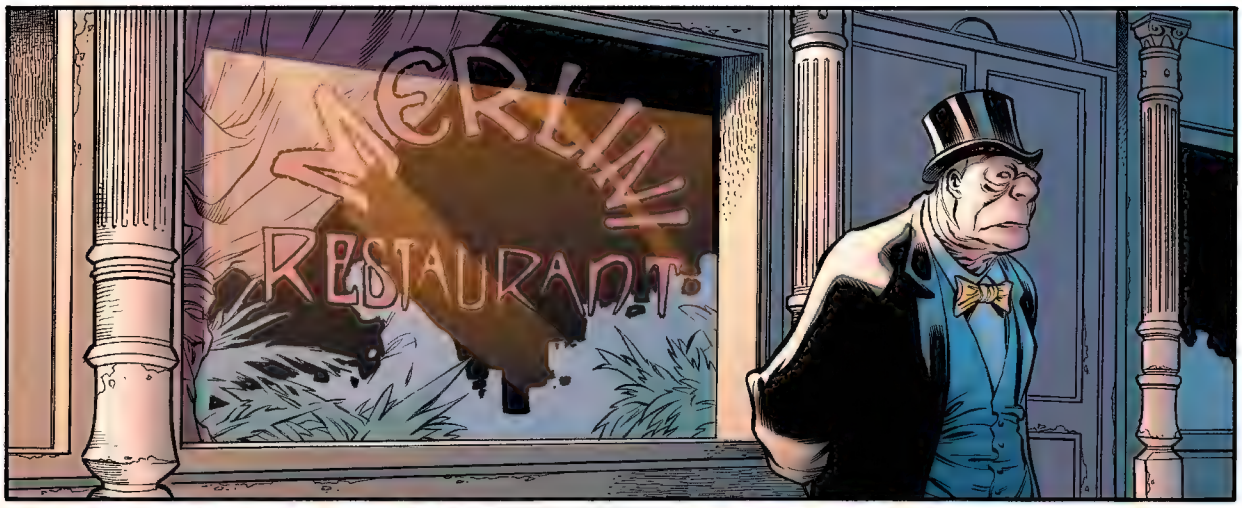
It was only temporary. Only fifteen minutes.

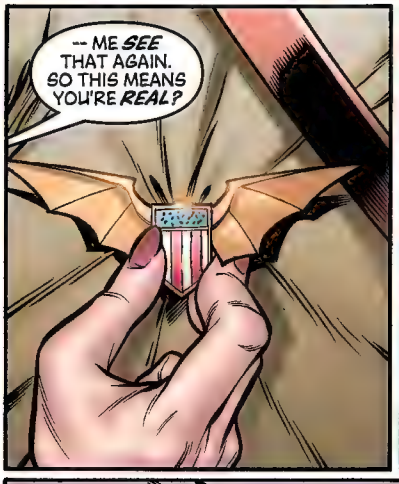
But still. Still...

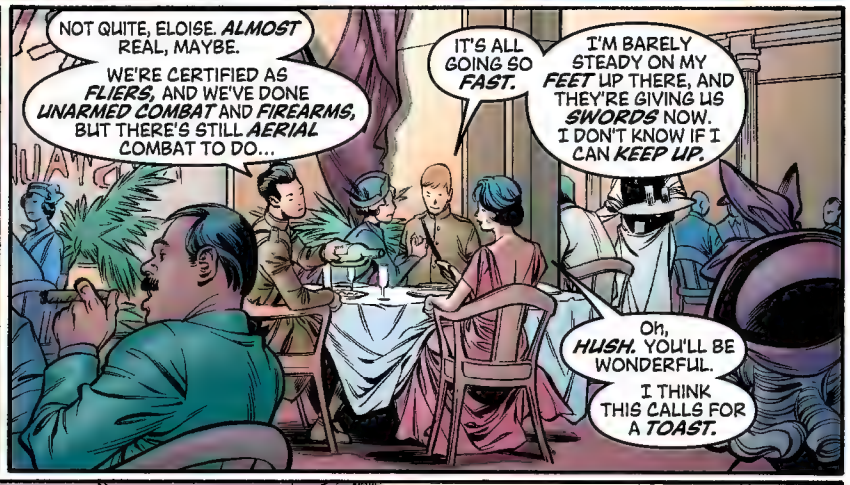
I'm an airman. I'll have my own dragonet soon.

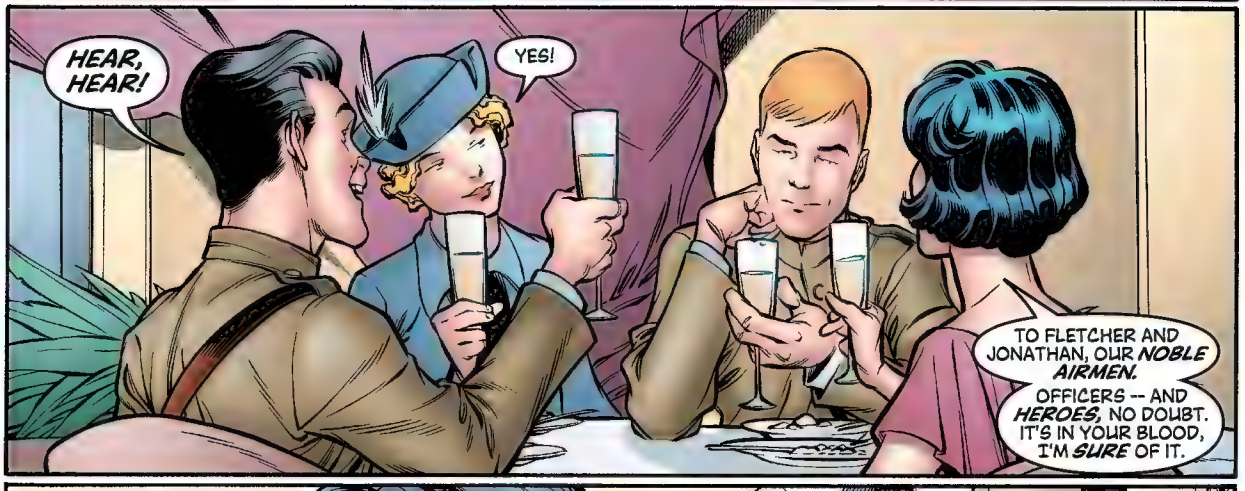
CONGRATULATIONS, AIRMAN THIRD CLASS ARROWSMITH. FIRST IN THE SQUAD.

BUT NOT THE *ONLY* ONE, I'LL WAGER. NOT FOR *LONG*...

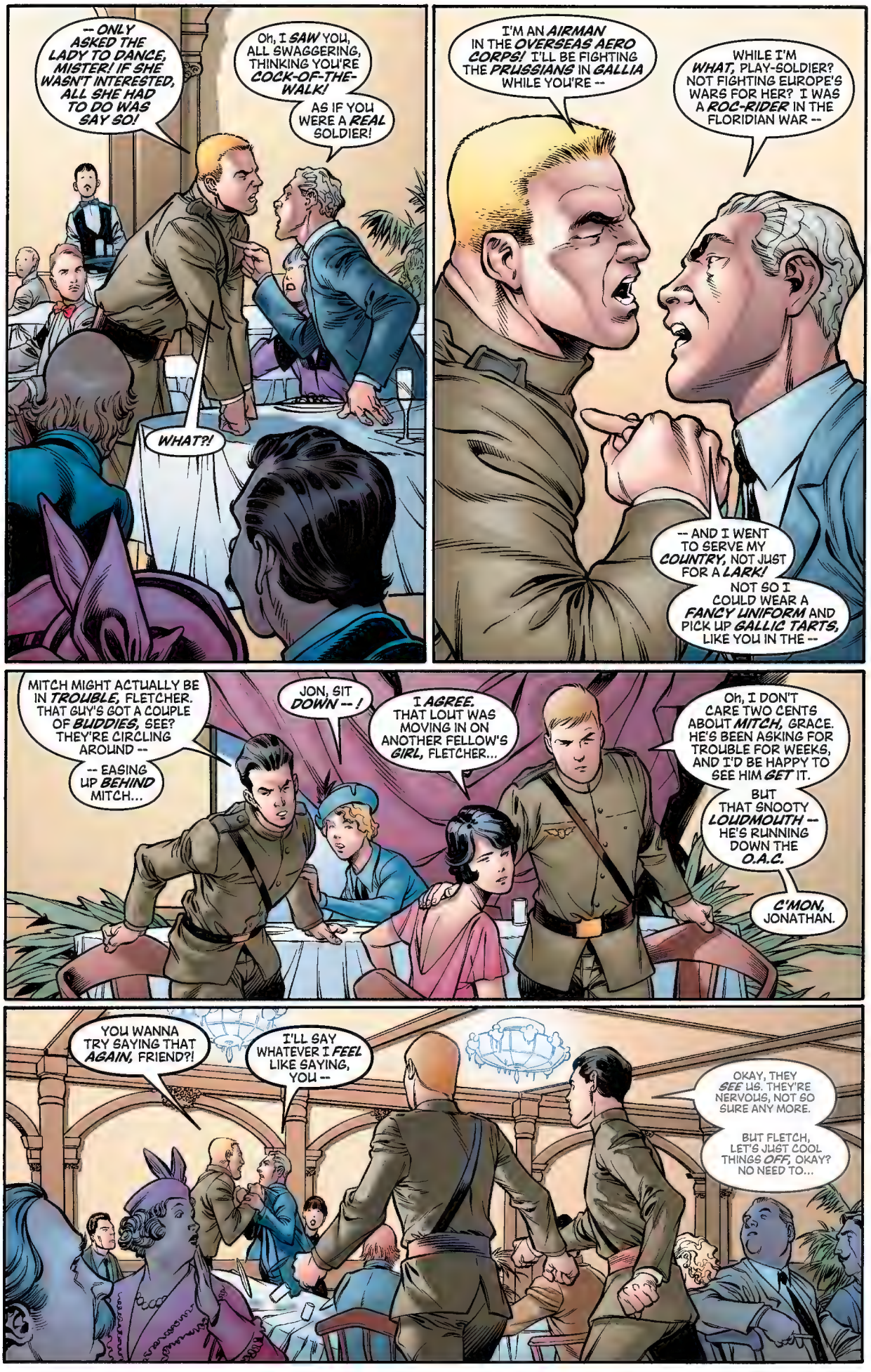

RESTAURANT


-- ME *SEE* THAT AGAIN. SO THIS MEANS YOU'RE *REAL?*


NOT QUITE, ELOISE. *ALMOST* REAL, MAYBE.
WE'RE CERTIFIED AS *FLIERS,* AND WE'VE DONE *UNARMED COMBAT* AND *FIREARMS,* BUT THERE'S STILL *AERIAL* COMBAT TO DO...
IT'S ALL GOING SO *FAST.*
I'M BARELY STEADY ON MY *FEET* UP THERE, AND THEY'RE GIVING US *SWORDS* NOW. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN *KEEP UP.*
Oh, *HUSH.* YOU'LL BE WONDERFUL.
I THINK THIS CALLS FOR A *TOAST.*

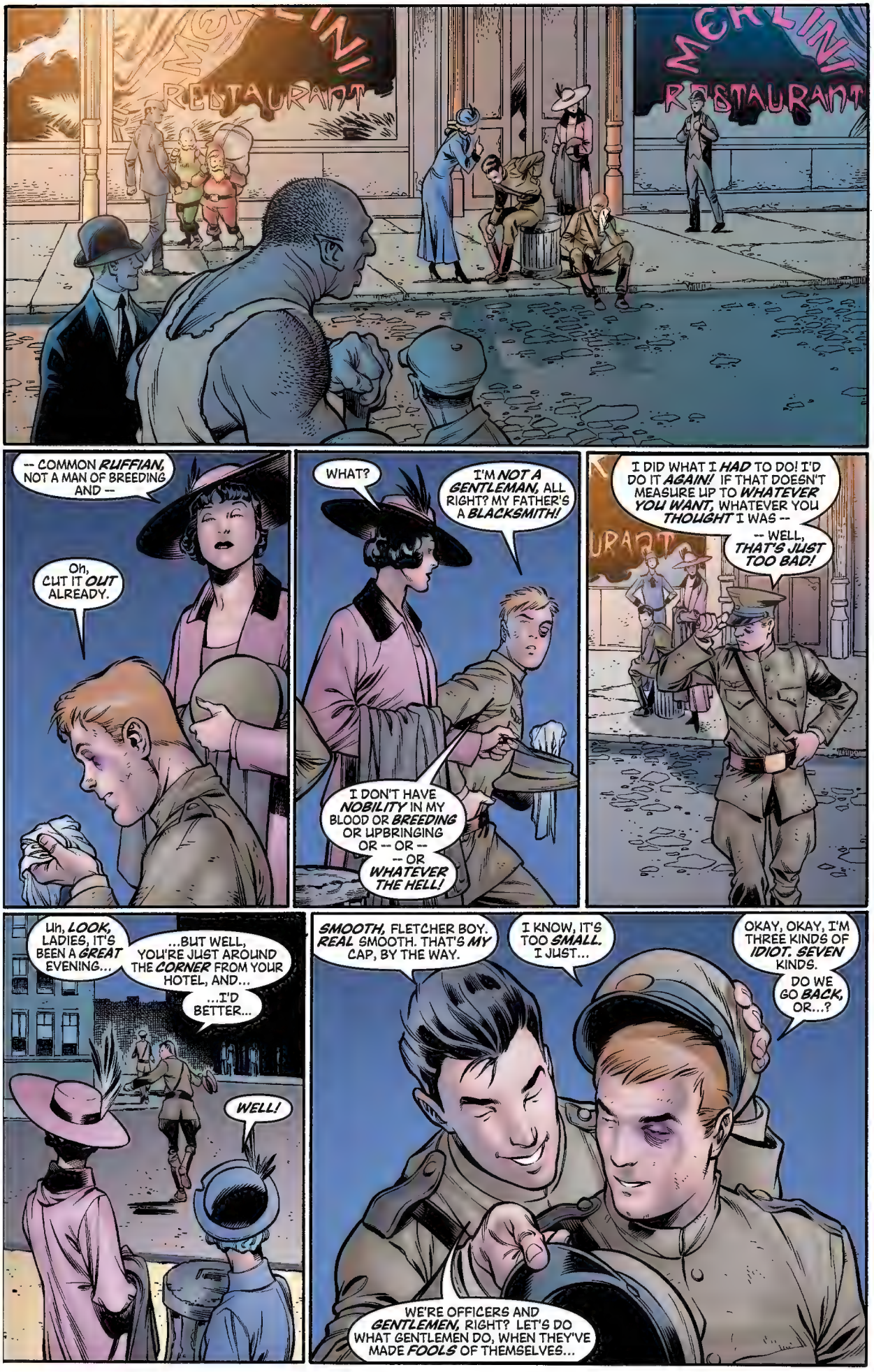

HEAR, HEAR!
YES!
TO FLETCHER AND JONATHAN, OUR *NOBLE AIRMEN.*
OFFICERS -- AND *HEROES,* NO DOUBT. IT'S IN YOUR BLOOD, I'M *SURE* OF IT.

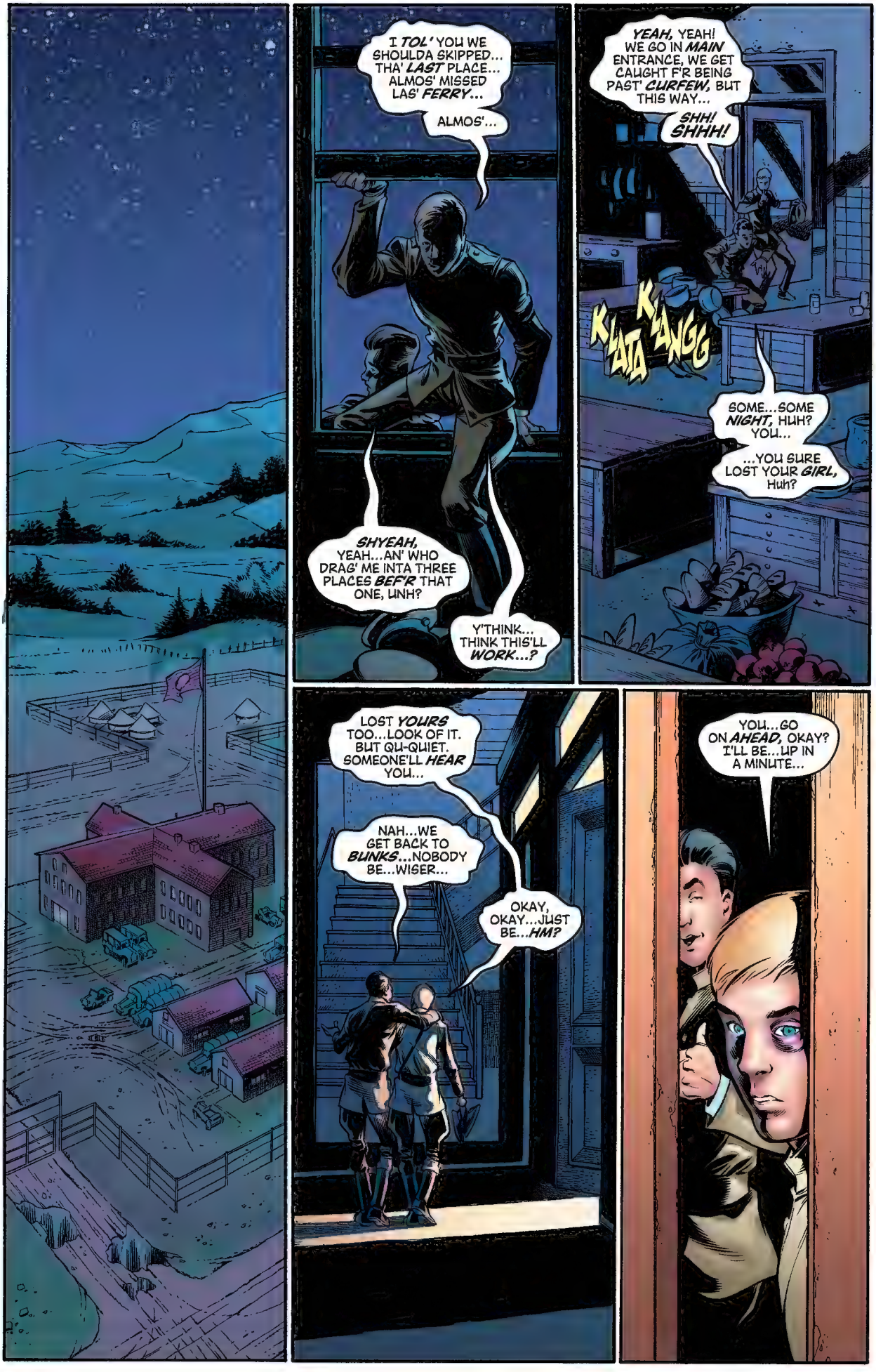
WHY, I KNEW FROM THE MOMENT I LAID *EYES* ON THIS YOUNG LAD THAT HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY -- EH?
-- THINK YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THAT CHEAP UNIFORM, EH?

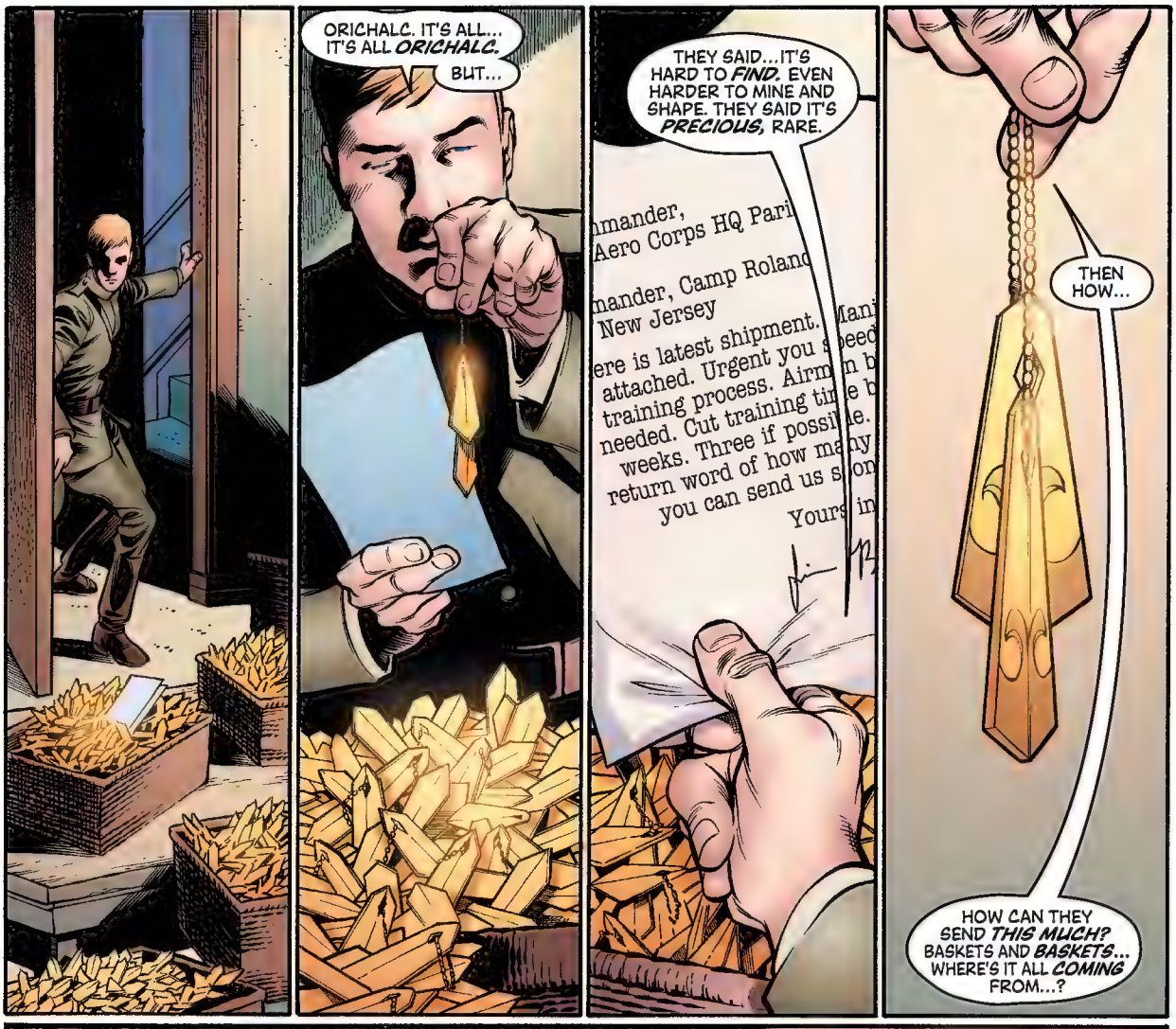

-- ONLY ASKED THE LADY TO DANCE, MISTER! IF SHE WASN'T INTERESTED, ALL SHE HAD TO DO WAS SAY SO!
Oh, I SAW YOU, ALL SWAGGERING, THINKING YOU'RE COCK-OF-THE-WALK!
AS IF YOU WERE A REAL SOLDIER!
WHAT?!
I'M AN AIRMAN IN THE OVERSEAS AERO CORPS! I'LL BE FIGHTING THE PRUSSIANS IN GALLIA WHILE YOU'RE --
WHILE I'M WHAT, PLAY-SOLDIER? NOT FIGHTING EUROPE'S WARS FOR HER? I WAS A ROC-RIDER IN THE FLORIDIAN WAR --
-- AND I WENT TO SERVE MY COUNTRY, NOT JUST FOR A LARK!
NOT SO I COULD WEAR A FANCY UNIFORM AND PICK UP GALLIC TARTS, LIKE YOU IN THE --
MITCH MIGHT ACTUALLY BE IN TROUBLE, FLETCHER. THAT GUY'S GOT A COUPLE OF BUDDIES, SEE? THEY'RE CIRCLING AROUND --
-- EASING UP BEHIND MITCH...
JON, SIT DOWN -- !
I AGREE. THAT LOUT WAS MOVING IN ON ANOTHER FELLOW'S GIRL, FLETCHER...
Oh, I DON'T CARE TWO CENTS ABOUT MITCH, GRACE. HE'S BEEN ASKING FOR TROUBLE FOR WEEKS, AND I'D BE HAPPY TO SEE HIM GET IT.
BUT THAT SNOOTY LOUDMOUTH -- HE'S RUNNING DOWN THE O.A.C.
C'MON, JONATHAN.
YOU WANNA TRY SAYING THAT AGAIN, FRIEND?!
I'LL SAY WHATEVER I FEEL LIKE SAYING, YOU --
OKAY, THEY SEE US. THEY'RE NERVOUS, NOT SO SURE ANY MORE.
BUT FLETCH, LET'S JUST COOL THINGS OFF, OKAY? NO NEED TO...

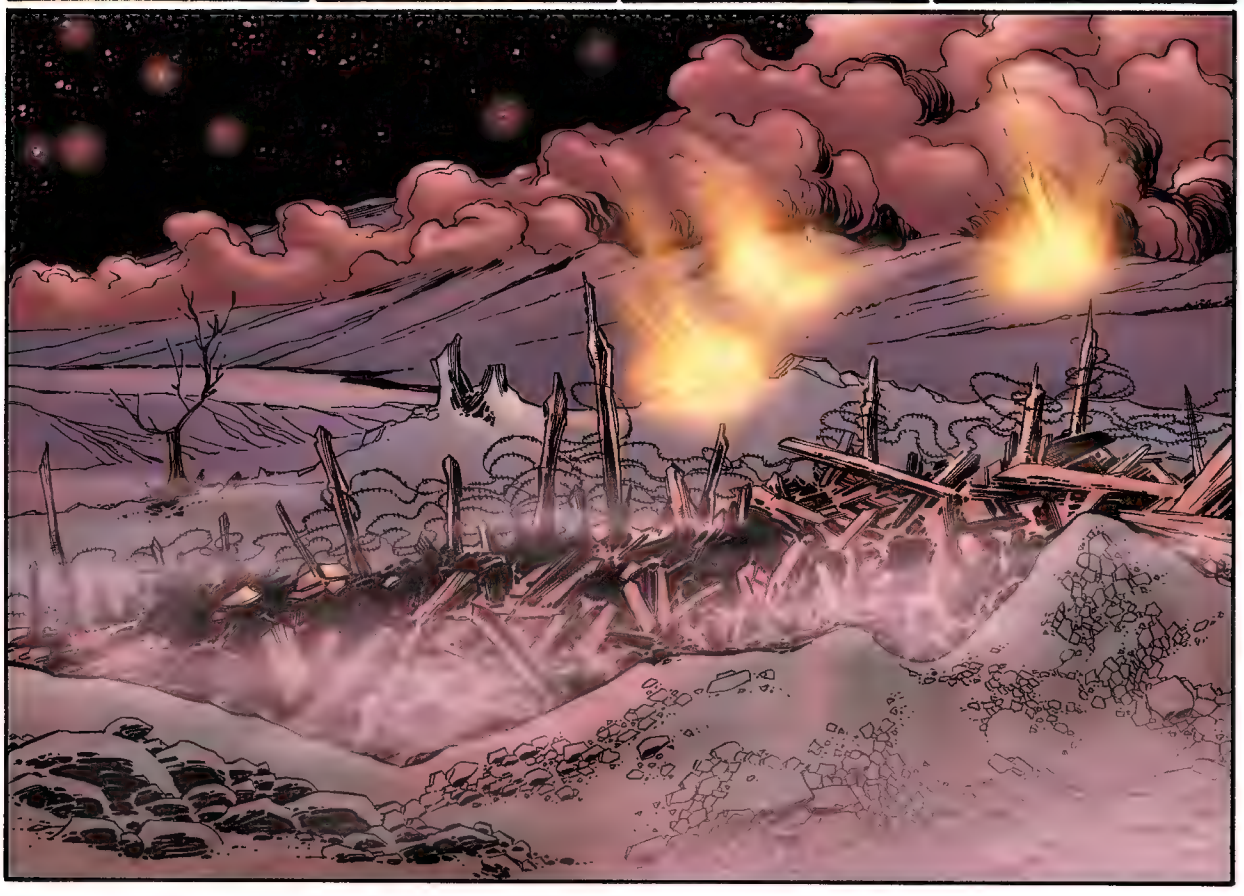
THERE A PROBLEM HERE?
NOTHING I NEED YOUR HELP WITH, ARROWSMITH.
MR. FLORIDA WAR HERO HERE WAS JUST LEAVING. WEREN'T YOU?
HEY!
MARION, JACK, HOWARD... WE'RE GOING!
I'LL OVERLOOK YOUR BOORISHNESS THIS TIME, PLAY-SOLDIER -- BUT IF YOUR FRIENDS WEREN'T HERE --
HAH!
THREE OF THEM, MITCH. LOOKED LIKE YOU COULD USE A HAND.
YEAH? WELL, IF I EVER NEED ANY HELP, ARROWSMITH, I'LL GET IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING --
-- NOT A USELESS LITTLE SUCK-UP LIKE YOU!
MIGHT WANT TO WATCH THAT, MITCH. NO SERGEANTS AROUND TO HAND OUT DEMERITS. YOU MIGHT HAVE TO BACK UP THAT MOUTH OF YOURS.
FLETCHER! FLETCHER, JUST FORGET ABOUT IT! I CAME HERE TO HAVE A NICE EVENING OUT, NOT WATCH A BRAWL.
OUR DINNERS ARE HERE. LET'S GO.
WELL --
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH YOU, ARROWSMITH. I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN WE GET TO GALLIA AND THE PRUSSIANS COME OUT OF THE CLOUDS?
WON'T BE ANY WOMEN'S SKIRTS THERE TO HIDE BEHIND...
WHAT? WHY, YOU --

--OOPHHKH!!!
-- IT UP TO HERE WITH YOU, TAGGART --
-- BROWN-NOSING LITTLE --
-- MUSCLE-BRAINED --
-- FRY YOUR --
OH. Oh! OH!
UH-OH...
ALL RIGHT, LADS! NO NEED TO BE GENTLE...!


MERLINI
RESTAURANT
-- COMMON RUFFIAN, NOT A MAN OF BREEDING AND --
Oh, CUT IT OUT ALREADY.
WHAT?
I'M NOT A GENTLEMAN, ALL RIGHT? MY FATHER'S A BLACKSMITH!
I DON'T HAVE NOBILITY IN MY BLOOD OR BREEDING OR UPBRINGING OR -- OR -- -- OR WHATEVER THE HELL!
I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO! I'D DO IT AGAIN! IF THAT DOESN'T MEASURE UP TO WHATEVER YOU WANT, WHATEVER YOU THOUGHT I WAS --
-- WELL, THAT'S JUST TOO BAD!
Uh, LOOK, LADIES, IT'S BEEN A GREAT EVENING...
...BUT WELL, YOU'RE JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM YOUR HOTEL, AND...
...I'D BETTER...
WELL!
SMOOTH, FLETCHER BOY. REAL SMOOTH. THAT'S MY CAP, BY THE WAY.
I KNOW, IT'S TOO SMALL. I JUST...
OKAY, OKAY, I'M THREE KINDS OF IDIOT. SEVEN KINDS.
DO WE GO BACK, OR...?
WE'RE OFFICERS AND GENTLEMEN, RIGHT? LET'S DO WHAT GENTLEMEN DO, WHEN THEY'VE MADE FOOLS OF THEMSELVES...


I TOL' YOU WE SHOULDA SKIPPED... THA' LAST PLACE... ALMOS' MISSED LAS' FERRY...
ALMOS'...
SHYEAH, YEAH...AN' WHO DRAG' ME INTA THREE PLACES BEF'R THAT ONE, UNH?
Y'THINK... THINK THIS'LL WORK...?
YEAH, YEAH! WE GO IN MAIN ENTRANCE, WE GET CAUGHT F'R BEING PAST' CURFEW, BUT THIS WAY...
SHH! SHHH!
KLATA KLANGG
SOME...SOME NIGHT, HUH? YOU...
...YOU SURE LOST YOUR GIRL, Huh?
LOST YOURS TOO...LOOK OF IT. BUT QU-QUIET. SOMEONE'LL HEAR YOU...
NAH...WE GET BACK TO BUNKS...NOBODY BE...WISER...
OKAY, OKAY...JUST BE...HM?
YOU...GO ON AHEAD, OKAY? I'LL BE...UP IN A MINUTE...


ORICHALC. IT'S ALL... IT'S ALL ORICHALC.
BUT...
THEY SAID...IT'S HARD TO FIND. EVEN HARDER TO MINE AND SHAPE. THEY SAID IT'S PRECIOUS, RARE.
THEN HOW...
HOW CAN THEY SEND THIS MUCH? BASKETS AND BASKETS... WHERE'S IT ALL COMING FROM...?



CHAPTER THREE

Down to the Sea in Ships

The North Atlantic. July 1915.

Dear Mrs. Kerry,

I know my mother shares my letters with you and your family, but since Jonathan doesn't write as much as he should, I thought I'd send this one to you.

I'll be posting this just before we leave, headed off to Gallia on the R.M.S. Crowninshield. It's one of the new ley-ships, and is it ever fast — it'll get us there in only six days!

We are both fully-qualified airmen now — flight-lieutenants junior-grade — though I have to say I don't feel like it yet.

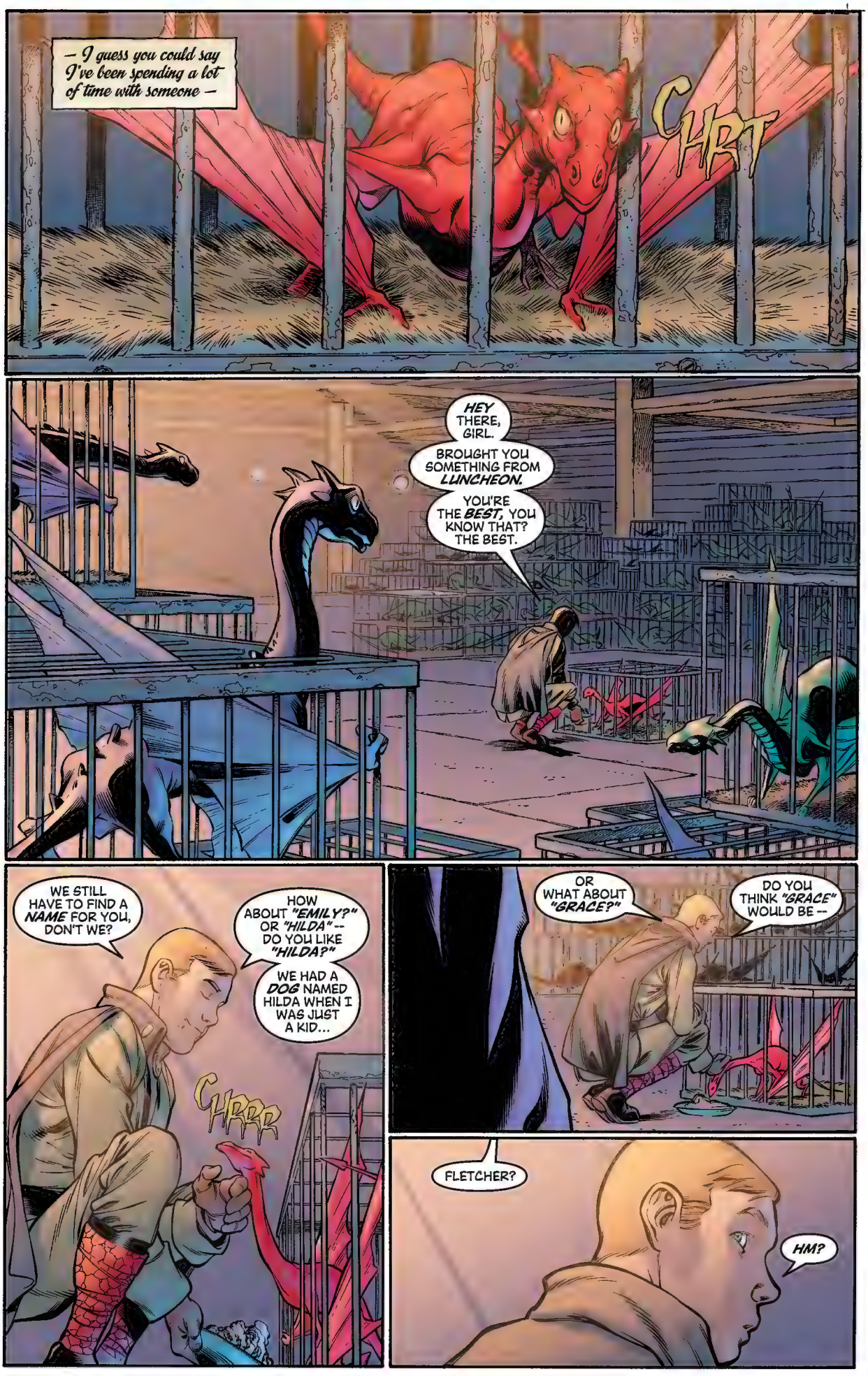
I'm nervous, excited — a little scared of what's coming, but amazed at the skills they've taught us.

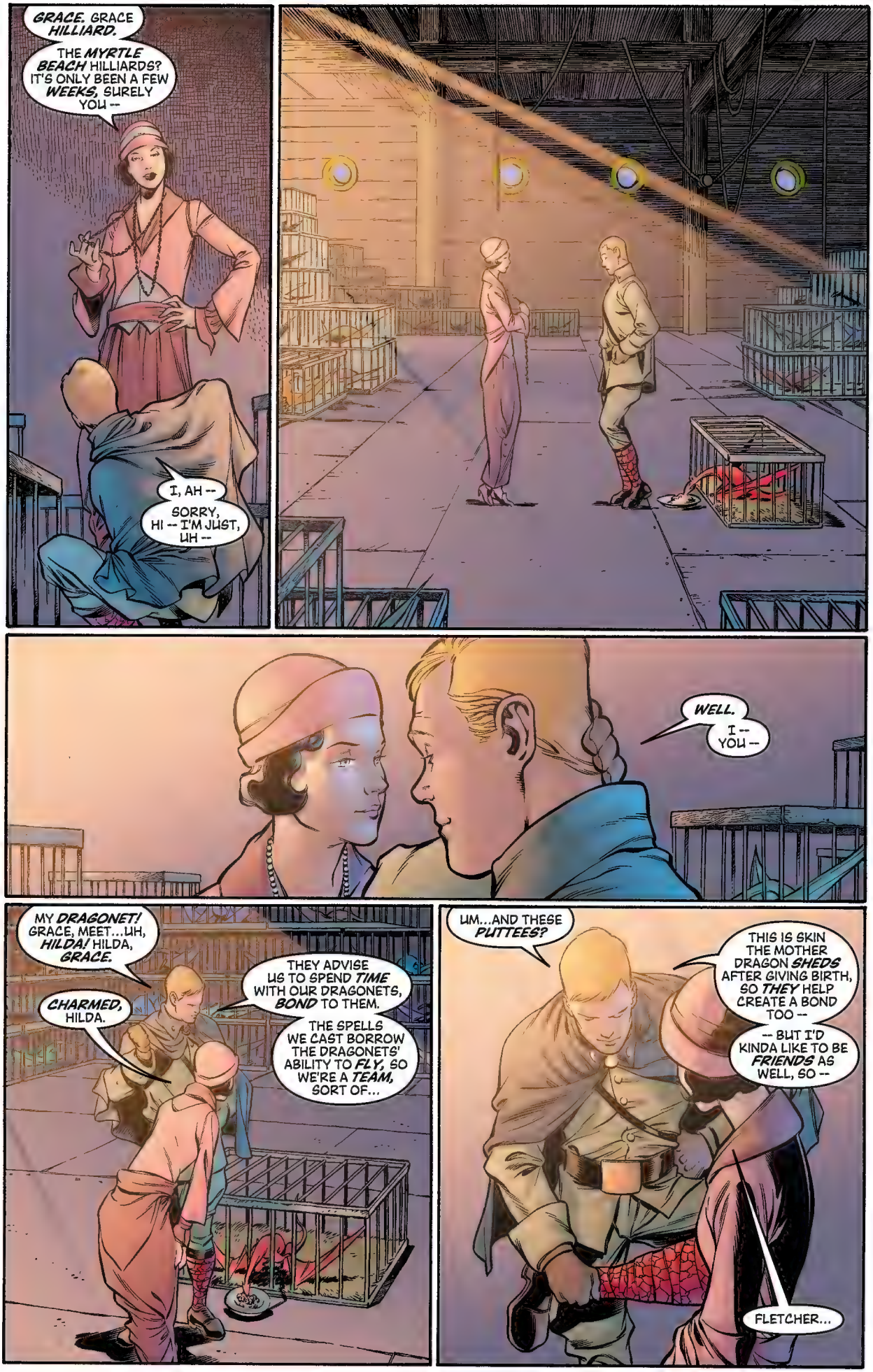
We really have had good instructors, and they've prepared us well.

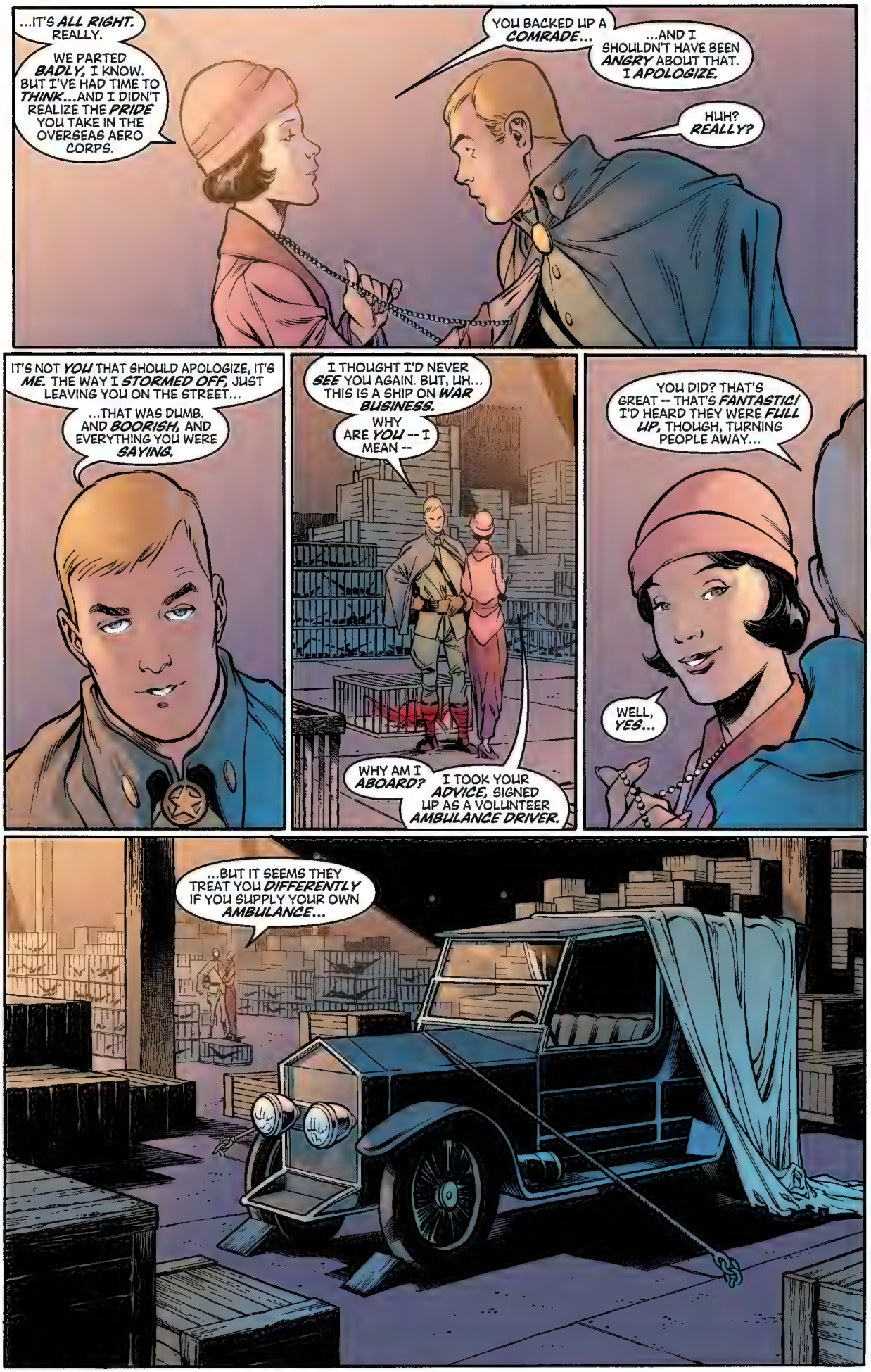
You'd be proud of Jonathan — he's been cool and steady in all our exercises. A careful, accomplished flier — I wish I was as good.

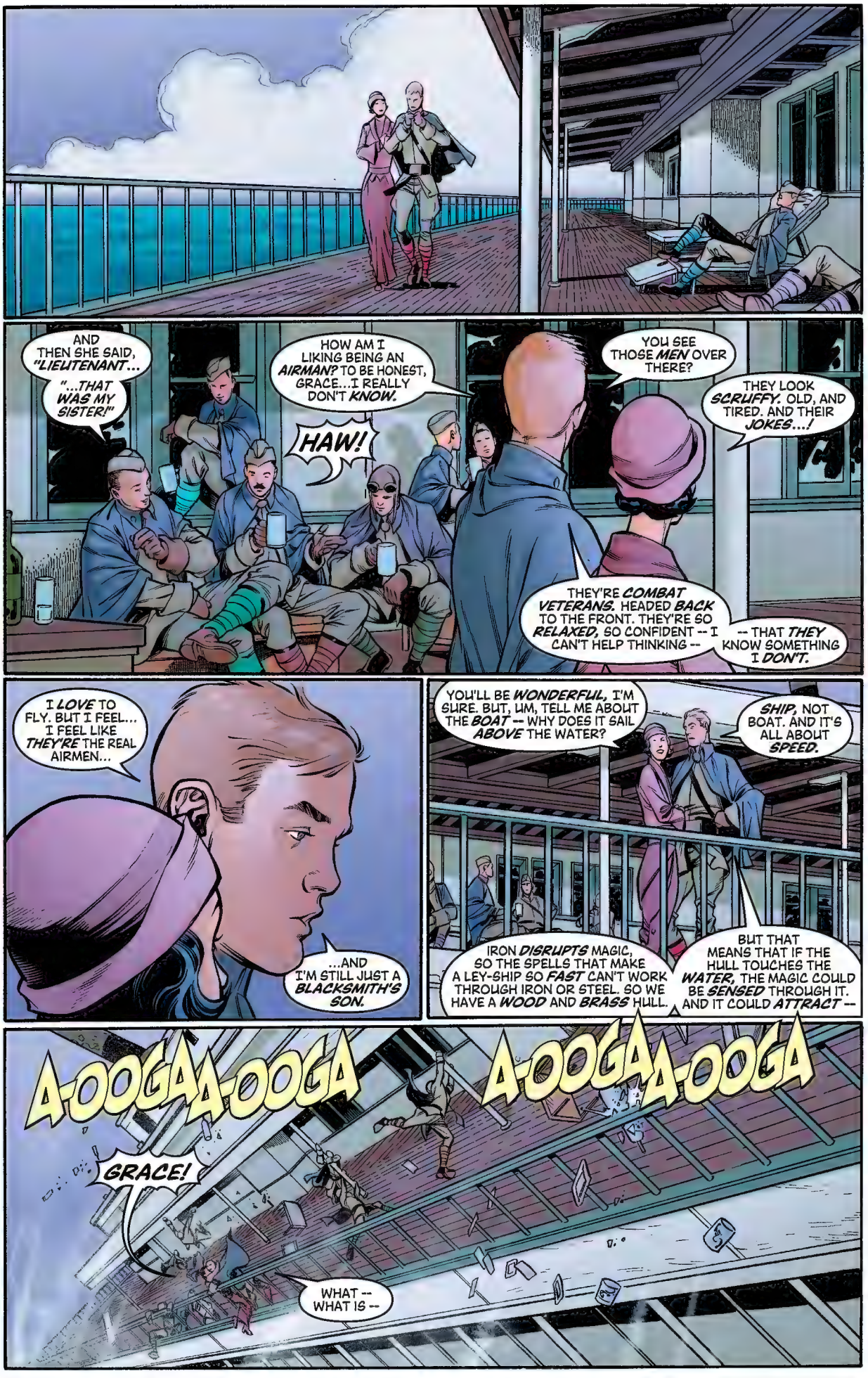
And he probably wouldn't want me to tell you this, but he's becoming quite the ladies' man, too. Always with a pretty girl on his arm at the dances, always a different girl —

— I don't know how he does it. As for me, well —

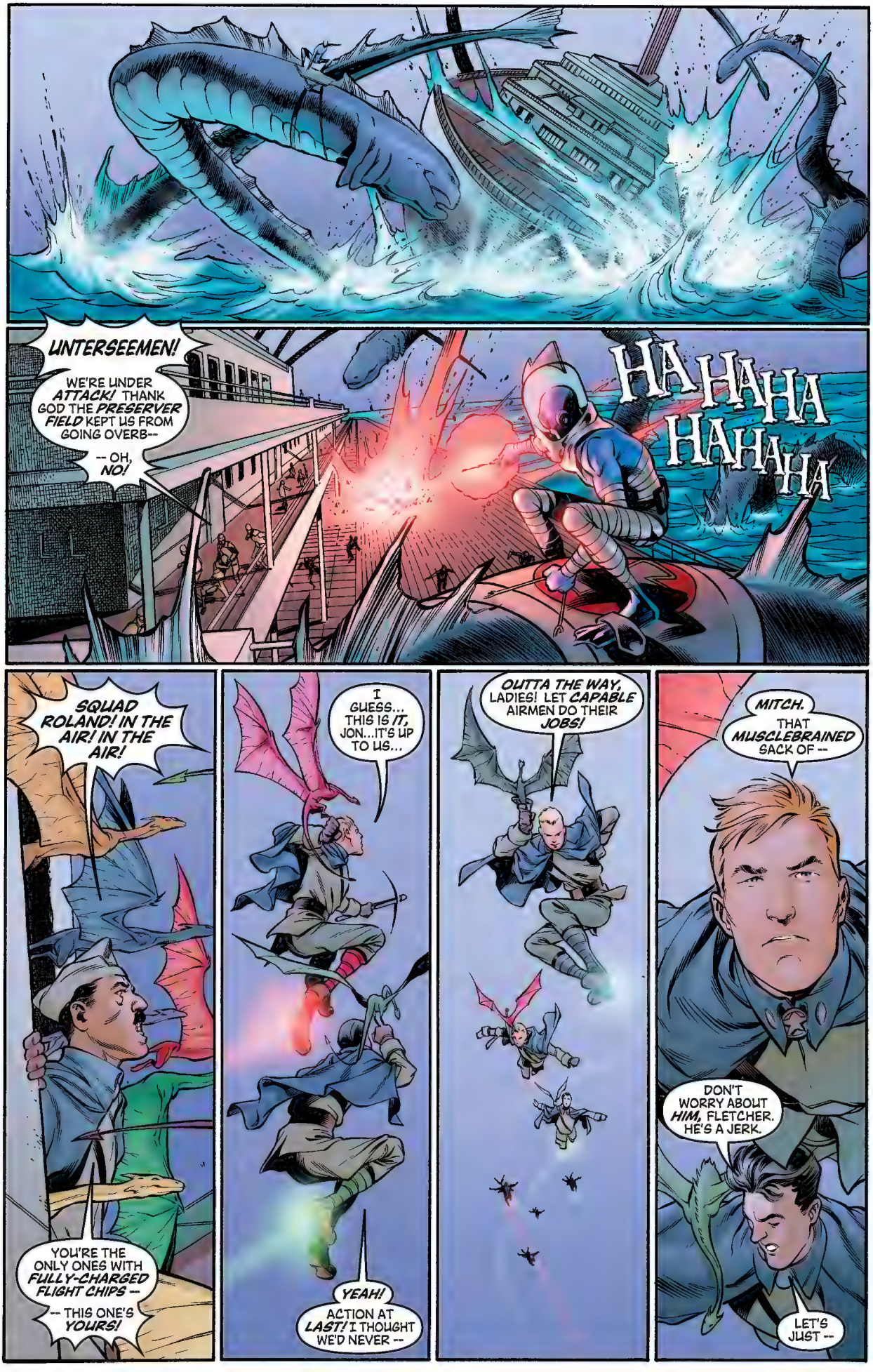

— I guess you could say I've been spending a lot of time with someone —
CHRT
HEY THERE, GIRL.
BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING FROM LUNCHEON.
YOU'RE THE BEST, YOU KNOW THAT? THE BEST.
WE STILL HAVE TO FIND A NAME FOR YOU, DON'T WE?
HOW ABOUT "EMILY?" OR "HILDA" -- DO YOU LIKE "HILDA?"
WE HAD A DOG NAMED HILDA WHEN I WAS JUST A KID...
CHRRR
OR WHAT ABOUT "GRACE?"
DO YOU THINK "GRACE" WOULD BE --
FLETCHER?
HM?


GRACE. GRACE HILLIARD.
THE MYRTLE BEACH HILLIARDS? IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW WEEKS, SURELY YOU --
I, AH --
SORRY, HI -- I'M JUST, UH --
WELL.
I -- YOU --
MY DRAGONET! GRACE, MEET...UH, HILDA! HILDA, GRACE.
CHARMED, HILDA.
THEY ADVISE US TO SPEND TIME WITH OUR DRAGONETS, BOND TO THEM.
THE SPELLS WE CAST BORROW THE DRAGONETS' ABILITY TO FLY, SO WE'RE A TEAM, SORT OF...
UM...AND THESE PUTTEES?
THIS IS SKIN THE MOTHER DRAGON SHEDS AFTER GIVING BIRTH, SO THEY HELP CREATE A BOND TOO --
-- BUT I'D KINDA LIKE TO BE FRIENDS AS WELL, SO --
FLETCHER...


...IT'S ALL RIGHT. REALLY.
WE PARTED BADLY, I KNOW. BUT I'VE HAD TIME TO THINK...AND I DIDN'T REALIZE THE PRIDE YOU TAKE IN THE OVERSEAS AERO CORPS.
YOU BACKED UP A COMRADE...
...AND I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANGRY ABOUT THAT. I APOLOGIZE.
HUH? REALLY?
IT'S NOT YOU THAT SHOULD APOLOGIZE, IT'S ME. THE WAY I STORMED OFF, JUST LEAVING YOU ON THE STREET...
...THAT WAS DUMB. AND BOORISH, AND EVERYTHING YOU WERE SAYING.
I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN. BUT, UH... THIS IS A SHIP ON WAR BUSINESS.
WHY ARE YOU -- I MEAN --
WHY AM I ABOARD?
I TOOK YOUR ADVICE, SIGNED UP AS A VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE DRIVER.
YOU DID? THAT'S GREAT -- THAT'S FANTASTIC! I'D HEARD THEY WERE FULL UP, THOUGH, TURNING PEOPLE AWAY...
WELL, YES...
...BUT IT SEEMS THEY TREAT YOU DIFFERENTLY IF YOU SUPPLY YOUR OWN AMBULANCE...


AND THEN SHE SAID, "LIEUTENANT...
"...THAT WAS MY SISTER!"
HOW AM I LIKING BEING AN AIRMAN? TO BE HONEST, GRACE...I REALLY DON'T KNOW.
HAW!
YOU SEE THOSE MEN OVER THERE?
THEY LOOK SCRUFFY. OLD, AND TIRED. AND THEIR JOKES...!
THEY'RE COMBAT VETERANS. HEADED BACK TO THE FRONT. THEY'RE SO RELAXED, SO CONFIDENT -- I CAN'T HELP THINKING --
-- THAT THEY KNOW SOMETHING I DON'T.
I LOVE TO FLY. BUT I FEEL... I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE THE REAL AIRMEN...
...AND I'M STILL JUST A BLACKSMITH'S SON.
YOU'LL BE WONDERFUL, I'M SURE. BUT, UM, TELL ME ABOUT THE BOAT -- WHY DOES IT SAIL ABOVE THE WATER?
SHIP, NOT BOAT. AND IT'S ALL ABOUT SPEED.
IRON DISRUPTS MAGIC, SO THE SPELLS THAT MAKE A LEY-SHIP SO FAST CAN'T WORK THROUGH IRON OR STEEL. SO WE HAVE A WOOD AND BRASS HULL.
BUT THAT MEANS THAT IF THE HULL TOUCHES THE WATER, THE MAGIC COULD BE SENSED THROUGH IT. AND IT COULD ATTRACT --
A-OOGA
A-OOGA
A-OOGA
A-OOGA
GRACE!
WHAT -- WHAT IS --

HRNHH
HRNKK

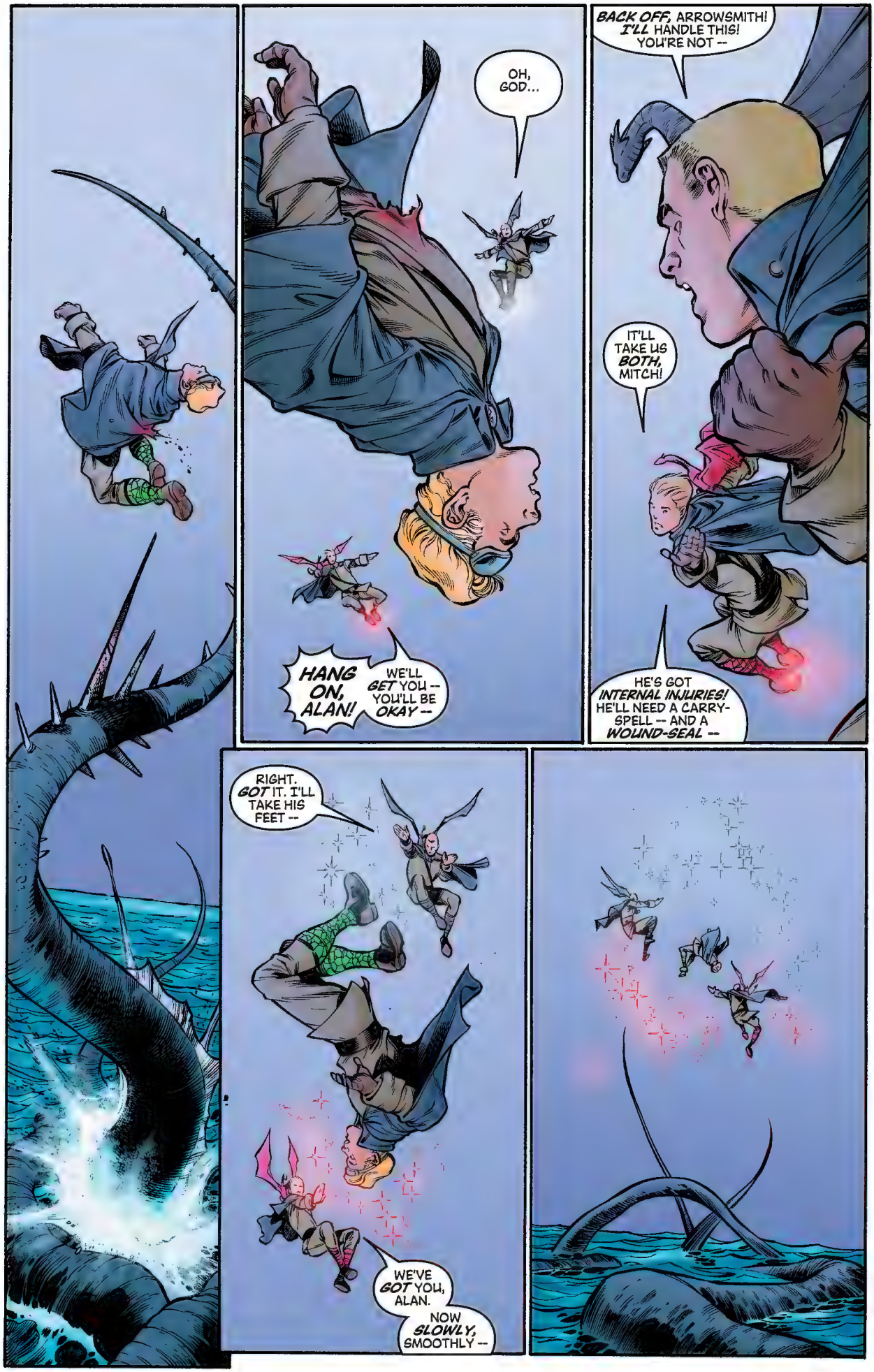

UNTERSEEMEN!
WE'RE UNDER ATTACK! THANK GOD THE PRESERVER FIELD KEPT US FROM GOING OVERB--
-- OH, NO!
HAHAHA HAHAHA
SQUAD ROLAND! IN THE AIR! IN THE AIR!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES WITH FULLY-CHARGED FLIGHT CHIPS --
-- THIS ONE'S YOURS!
I GUESS... THIS IS IT, JON...IT'S UP TO US...
YEAH! ACTION AT LAST! I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER --
OUTTA THE WAY, LADIES! LET CAPABLE AIRMEN DO THEIR JOBS!
MITCH. THAT MUSCLEBRAINED SACK OF --
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, FLETCHER. HE'S A JERK.
LET'S JUST --

KRAHH
POOM
POOM
POOM
BOYS! BOYS! YOU WON'T STOP 'EM THAT WAY!
HERE --

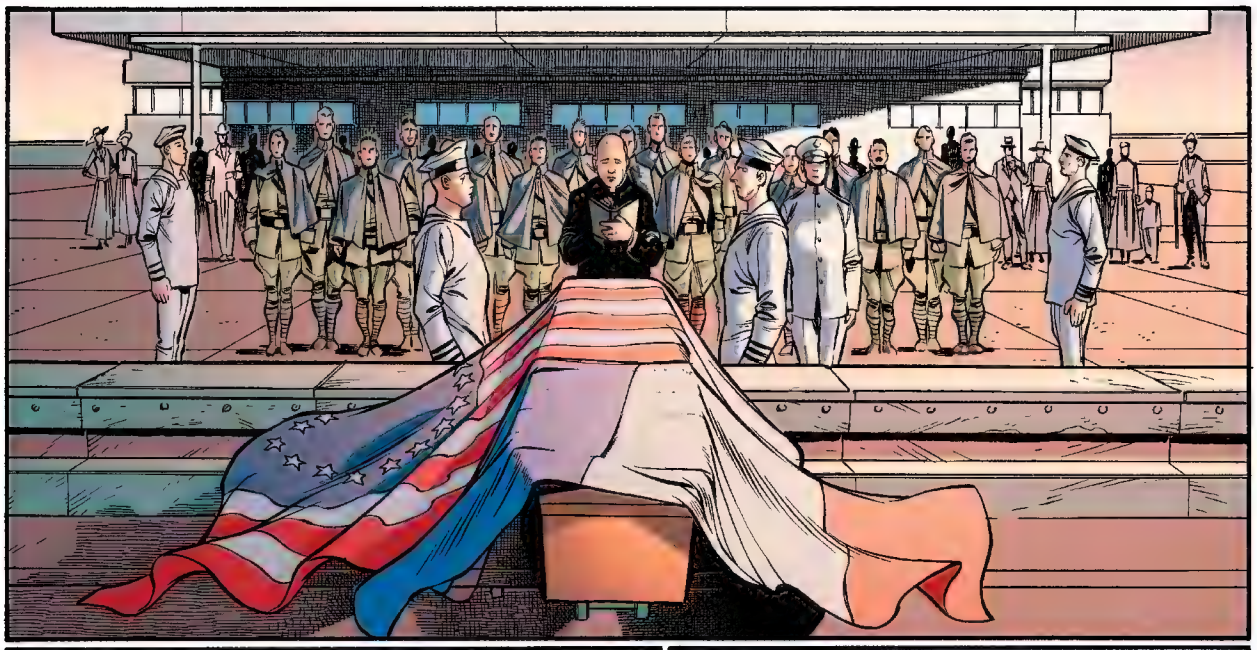
-- TAKE THESE!
A DOZEN PRANA-GRENADES IN EACH SATCHEL! THE SERPENTS ARE ARMORED ON THE OUTSIDE -- TOO TOUGH FOR OUR CROSSBOW QUARRELS --
-- BUT INSIDE --
BATTM
OKAY, OKAY -- I CAN --
BLAM
I DID IT! I DID IT!
YOU SEE THAT, FLETCHER-BOY? I GOT ONE!

HMM.
SMARTENED UP, HAS HE? NOT GOING TO BE TAKEN BY THE SAME TRICK?
AAA!
WHOA!
CH-CH-CH-CH!
DON'T WORRY, MATILDA, WE'LL GET HIM. MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT.
WE'LL SWOOP AROUND, COME AT HIM FROM STARBOARD REAR --
PTAK
PTAK
AND --
HP
PERFECT!

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT!
I GREW UP IN THE *MARITIMES*, BOYS -- WE LEARNED HOW TO DEAL WITH --
ALAN!
ALAN, *BEHIND* YOU!
ALAN, *MOVE!*
BEHIND --


OH, GOD...
HANG ON, ALAN!
WE'LL GET YOU -- YOU'LL BE OKAY --
BACK OFF, ARROWSMITH! I'LL HANDLE THIS! YOU'RE NOT --
IT'LL TAKE US BOTH, MITCH!
HE'S GOT INTERNAL INJURIES! HE'LL NEED A CARRY-SPELL -- AND A WOUND-SEAL --
RIGHT. GOT IT. I'LL TAKE HIS FEET --
WE'VE GOT YOU, ALAN.
NOW SLOWLY, SMOOTHLY --

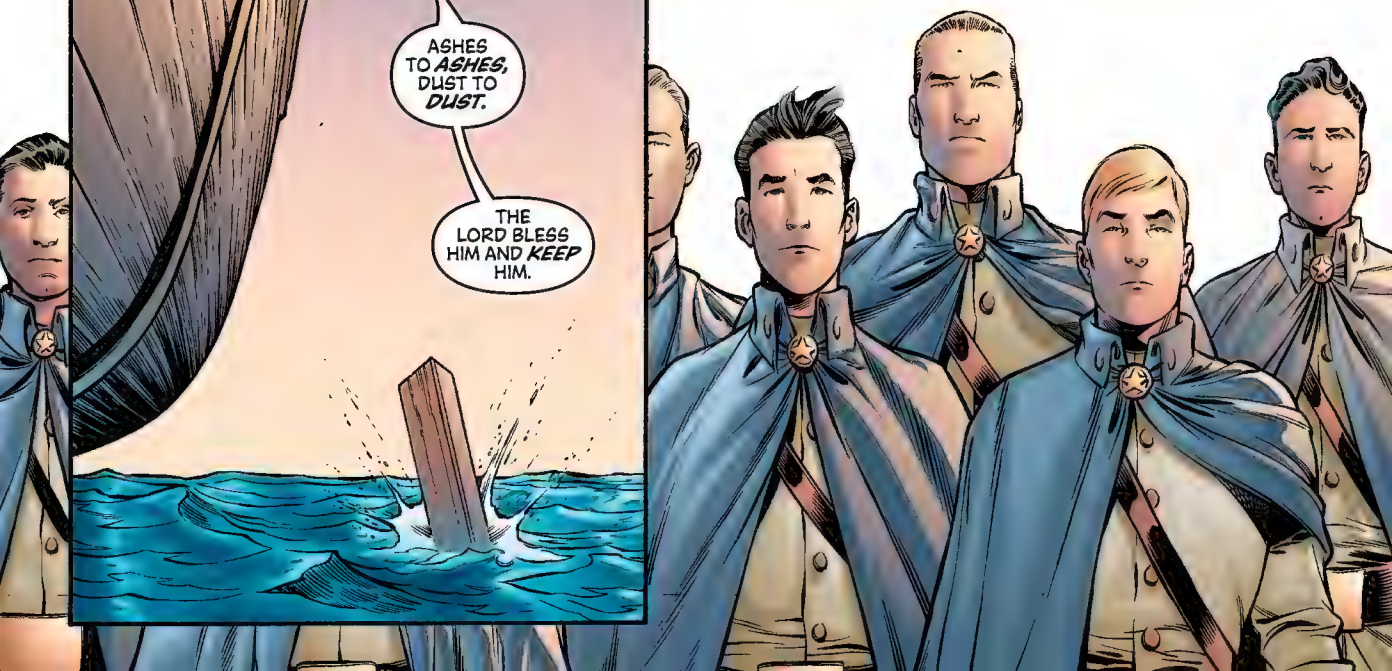
MEDIC!
WE NEED A MEDIC HERE -- THIS MAN'S BEEN GORED!
HE SAVED THE WHOLE SHIP, BUT THE SERPENT'S TAIL, IT --
WE GOT A SEAL ON HIM FAST --
I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, SON.
THAT WAS...GOOD THINKIN', ARROWSMITH. YOU...NICE WORK.
YOU'D HAVE DONE THE --
BOYS, IT WAS A GOOD TRY --
-- BUT I'M SORRY. THIS MAN'S ALREADY DEAD.
WHAT?
BUT --
THAT WAS SOMETHING, HUH?
HOW'S OL' ALAN? IS HE GONNA BE...?
...OH.

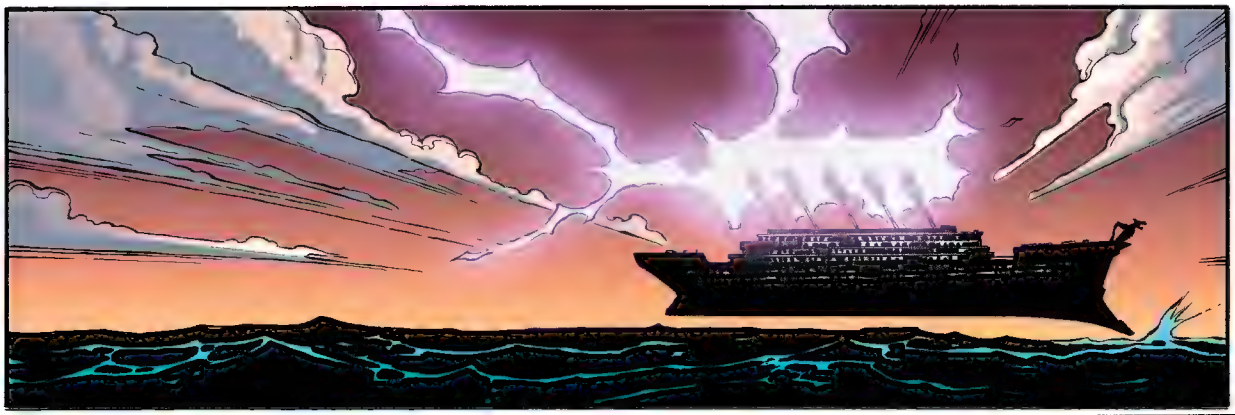


...WITH THE GRATEFUL THANKS OF *TWO NATIONS*...AND *MORE*...FOR HIS BRAVERY AND *SACRIFICE.*
WE COMMEND TO ALMIGHTY GOD OUR BROTHER *ALAN BOTWOOD*...

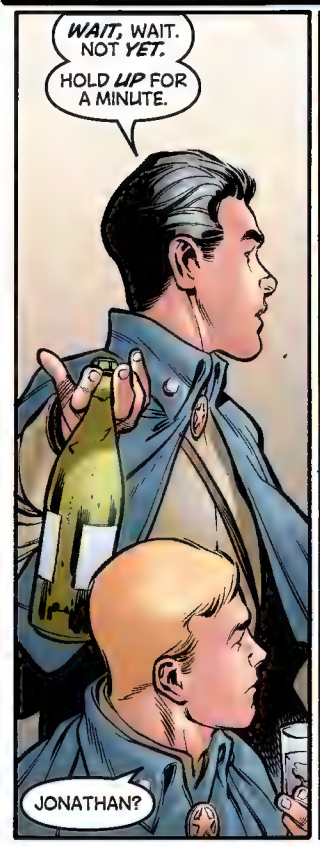
...AND WE COMMIT HIS BODY TO THE *DEEP.*

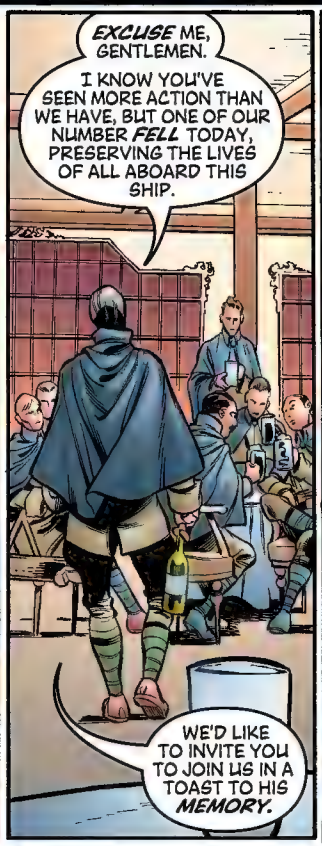
ASHES TO *ASHES,* DUST TO *DUST.*
THE LORD BLESS HIM AND *KEEP* HIM.



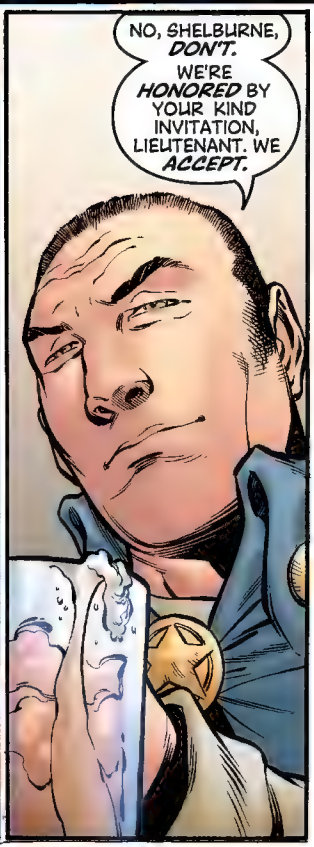


-- FROM NEWFOUNDLAND, I THINK, UP NEAR LEWISPORTE --
-- THE OLDEST. TWO BROTHERS --
-- WHEN HE STOLE ALL THE UNIFORMS FROM THE BARRACKS LAUNDRY AND DUMPED THEM --
FISHING, OF COURSE, THAT'S HOW HE --
-- DID A SNAP-ROLL LIKE HE WAS BORN TO IT, TAUGHT THE WHOLE --
-- HAD A GIRL BACK HOME --
-- ALWAYS SMILING, ALWAYS --
AH! HERE'S THE LAST OF THE CHAMPAGNE. A TOAST THEN -- TO ALAN!
TO ALAN!

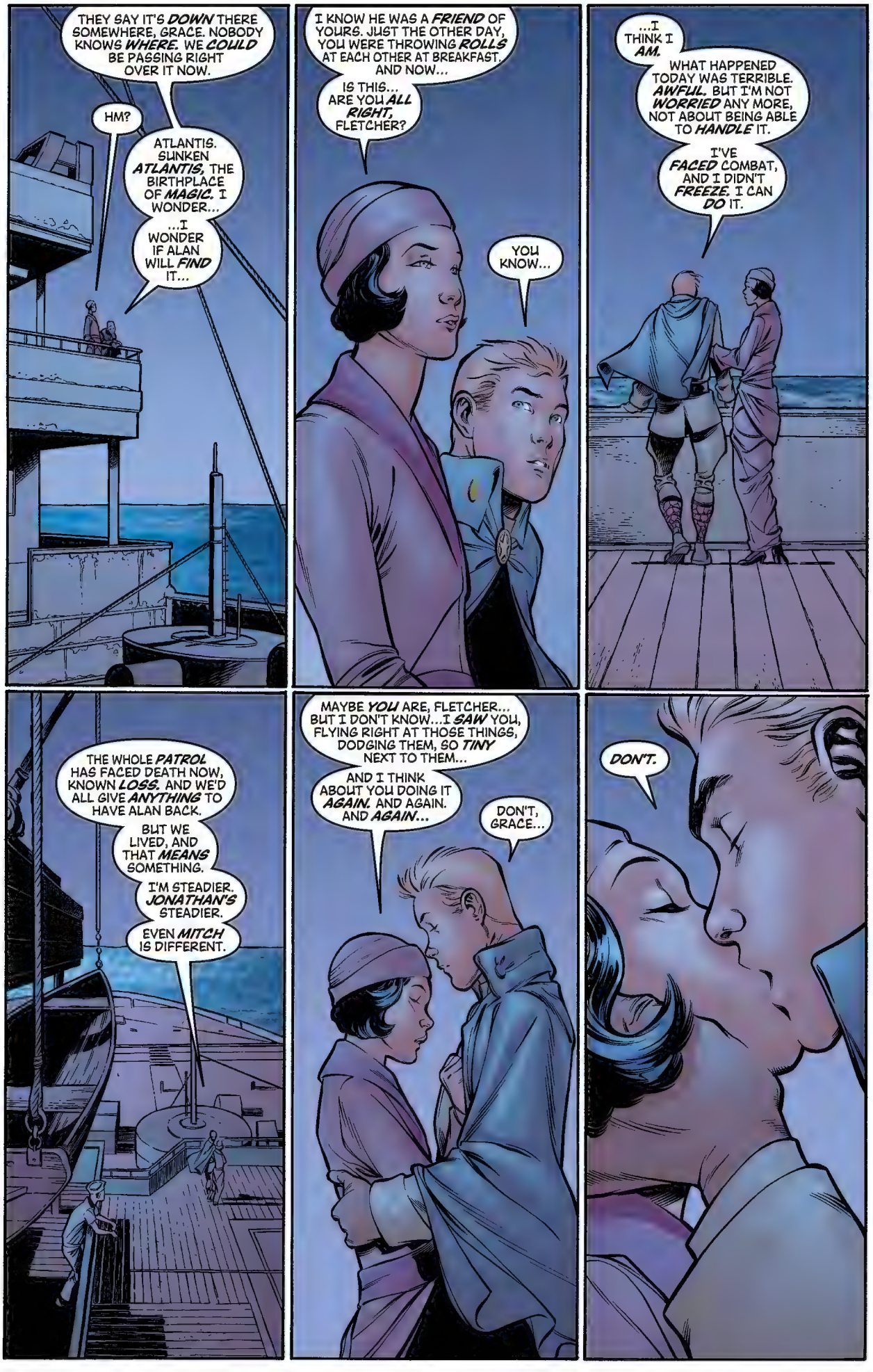

WAIT, WAIT. NOT YET.
HOLD UP FOR A MINUTE.
JONATHAN?


EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN.
I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN MORE ACTION THAN WE HAVE, BUT ONE OF OUR NUMBER FELL TODAY, PRESERVING THE LIVES OF ALL ABOARD THIS SHIP.
WE'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN A TOAST TO HIS MEMORY.

A WHAT?
ONE OF YOU DOWNY CHICKS GOT ET BY THE CAT, AND YOU WANT US TO HELP YOU WAIL? COME BACK WHEN YOU'VE --


NO, SHELBURNE, DON'T. WE'RE HONORED BY YOUR KIND INVITATION, LIEUTENANT. WE ACCEPT.

TO ALAN BOTWOOD, THEN. WHO FELL IN BATTLE, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM AND HONOR.
WE DIDN'T KNOW HIM LONG --
-- BUT WE REMEMBER HIM FOR HIS GOOD SPIRITS, HIS READILY-OFFERED HAND, HIS SKILL, HIS FRIENDSHIP --
-- AND HIS SACRIFICE. HE WAS THE FIRST. HE WILL NOT BE THE LAST.
WE WILL HOLD HIM IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.
TO ALAN!
ALAN.
ALAN!


THEY SAY IT'S DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE, GRACE. NOBODY KNOWS WHERE. WE COULD BE PASSING RIGHT OVER IT NOW.
HM?
ATLANTIS. SUNKEN ATLANTIS, THE BIRTHPLACE OF MAGIC. I WONDER...
...I WONDER IF ALAN WILL FIND IT...
I KNOW HE WAS A FRIEND OF YOURS. JUST THE OTHER DAY, YOU WERE THROWING ROLLS AT EACH OTHER AT BREAKFAST. AND NOW...
IS THIS... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, FLETCHER?
YOU KNOW...
...I THINK I AM.
WHAT HAPPENED TODAY WAS TERRIBLE. AWFUL. BUT I'M NOT WORRIED ANY MORE, NOT ABOUT BEING ABLE TO HANDLE IT.
I'VE FACED COMBAT, AND I DIDN'T FREEZE. I CAN DO IT.
THE WHOLE PATROL HAS FACED DEATH NOW, KNOWN LOSS. AND WE'D ALL GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE ALAN BACK.
BUT WE LIVED, AND THAT MEANS SOMETHING.
I'M STEADIER. JONATHAN'S STEADIER.
EVEN MITCH IS DIFFERENT.
MAYBE YOU ARE, FLETCHER... BUT I DON'T KNOW...I SAW YOU, FLYING RIGHT AT THOSE THINGS, DODGING THEM, SO TINY NEXT TO THEM...
AND I THINK ABOUT YOU DOING IT AGAIN. AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN...
DON'T, GRACE...
DON'T.

Dear Winnie,
Well, we got here.
We arrived in Le Havre today. I was in New Jersey a week ago, and now I'm in Europe. Can you believe it?
Le Havre's a very pretty harbor town, you'd like it. They had a welcoming ceremony for us — the mayor, the press, some others.
They seemed a little bored, though — I think they've done a lot of them.
Grace had to catch a train, to ship her ambulance to Paris, and from there to the front. I told you about her, you'd like her too.
It's a shame she couldn't stay. They're having a kind of party for us — dinner, dancing, and I bet there'll be some speeches —
WRITE ME, CARE OF THE V.A.S.-- IT'LL FIND ME, EVENTUALLY!
HAVE A SAFE TRIP!
— and then we fly to Beauvais, where we'll be split up, and sent to our permanent assignments. That's when the job really starts!

EVERYBODY UP!
ROLL OUT! ROLL OUT! DAWN PATROL IN FIVE MINUTES!
NNH... WHAT TIME IS...
WAIT... PATROL? BEFORE BREAKFAST?
YOU EAT WHEN YOU GET BACK! THIS IS DAWN PATROL!
DAWN PATROL!
'KAY... OKAY...
STAY ALERT!
AND ROLL OUT FASTER NEXT TIME!
IT ISN'T CALLED DAWN PATROL FOR FUN!
=IHHHH=
HAD TOO MUCH WINE AT THAT PARTY... ALL FUZZY...
I TOLD YOU, JON. YOU COULD BARELY FLY, BUT --
HUH?
WHAT? WHERE'S EVERYONE G --

LOOK LIVELY, LADS!
PRUSSIANS!
LOOK OUT! HERE THEY --
AHH! SO LOUD -- BRIGHT -- ! WHERE'S --
MITCH?!

FRAMM
TOO FAST -- I CAN'T -- TOO --
JONATHAN! JONATHAN! FORM UP, BACK TO BACK! WATCH EACH OTHER! WE CAN GET THROUGH THIS! WE CAN --
OH DEAR GOD IN HEAVEN.
JONATHAN--?!

TONY DANIEL'S
SCOTTISH
WHISKEY

CHAPTER FOUR

La Vie en Escadrille

Near Soissons, Gallia.
August 1915

Dear Mom.

I don't know if you've been told. Jonathan is dead.

One minute he was behind me, and the next he was gone, falling. He was hit by an incendiary bolt.

And Mitch. I told you about him. His throat was cut. He managed to get a preservation spell cast, and it might have done some good, but he'd tumbled into gun range by then and ~~before he recovered, he'd been blown to~~

It was our first patrol. ~~Just the night before, we'd been~~

I can't send this. I can't send this.

God. I can't even write this.

Dear Mom.

How are you? I'm all right. I guess the O.A.C. has let the Kerrys know about Jonathan's death by now.

I will write to them myself soon, but in the meantime please let them know how sorry I am. ~~He died fighting for freedom, and all the way to the end he was~~

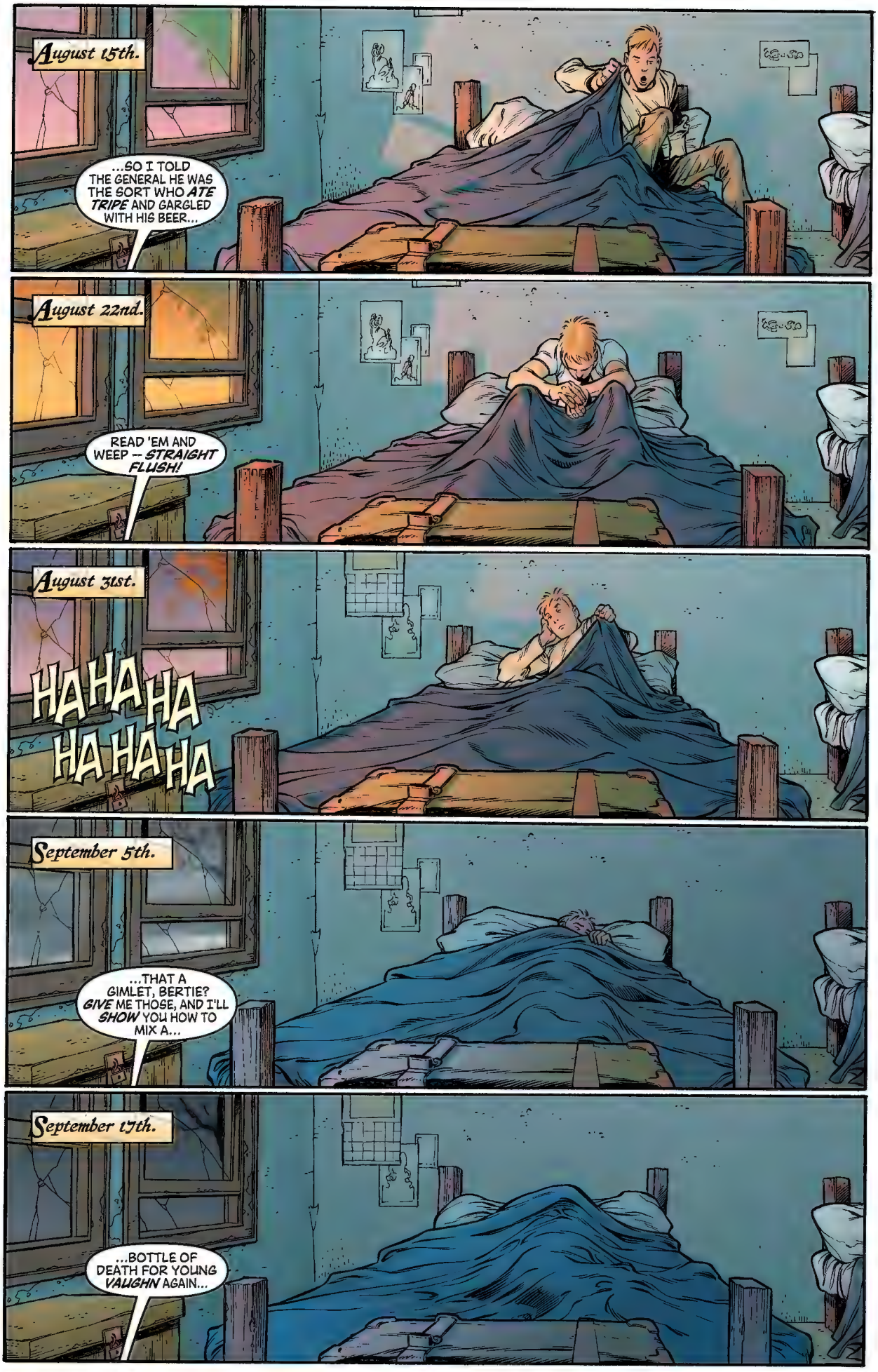
Don't worry. I'm being careful and getting enough to eat. Sometimes it's very quiet over here, believe it or not. Sometimes, of course —

— it's not.
AAAAAAAA
We're doing something worthwhile, though. Something that matters.
But it's not like I thought it would be. It's not like I thought it would be at all.
AHH!
JOHNSON? JOHNSON?!
We fly and we die and we fly again and it never ends and I had no idea I wasn't ready and I dream about Jonathan and—
Damn it.
Damn it damn it damn it.
MY SWORD — I DROPPED MY —
C'MON, HILDA, WE CAN DO THIS. JUST HOLD IT TOGETHER DON'T PANIC — WE KNOW WHICH WAY IS DOWN WE CAN ORIENT KEEP FOCUSED —
WATCH OUR BACK WATCH ABOVE AND BELOW —

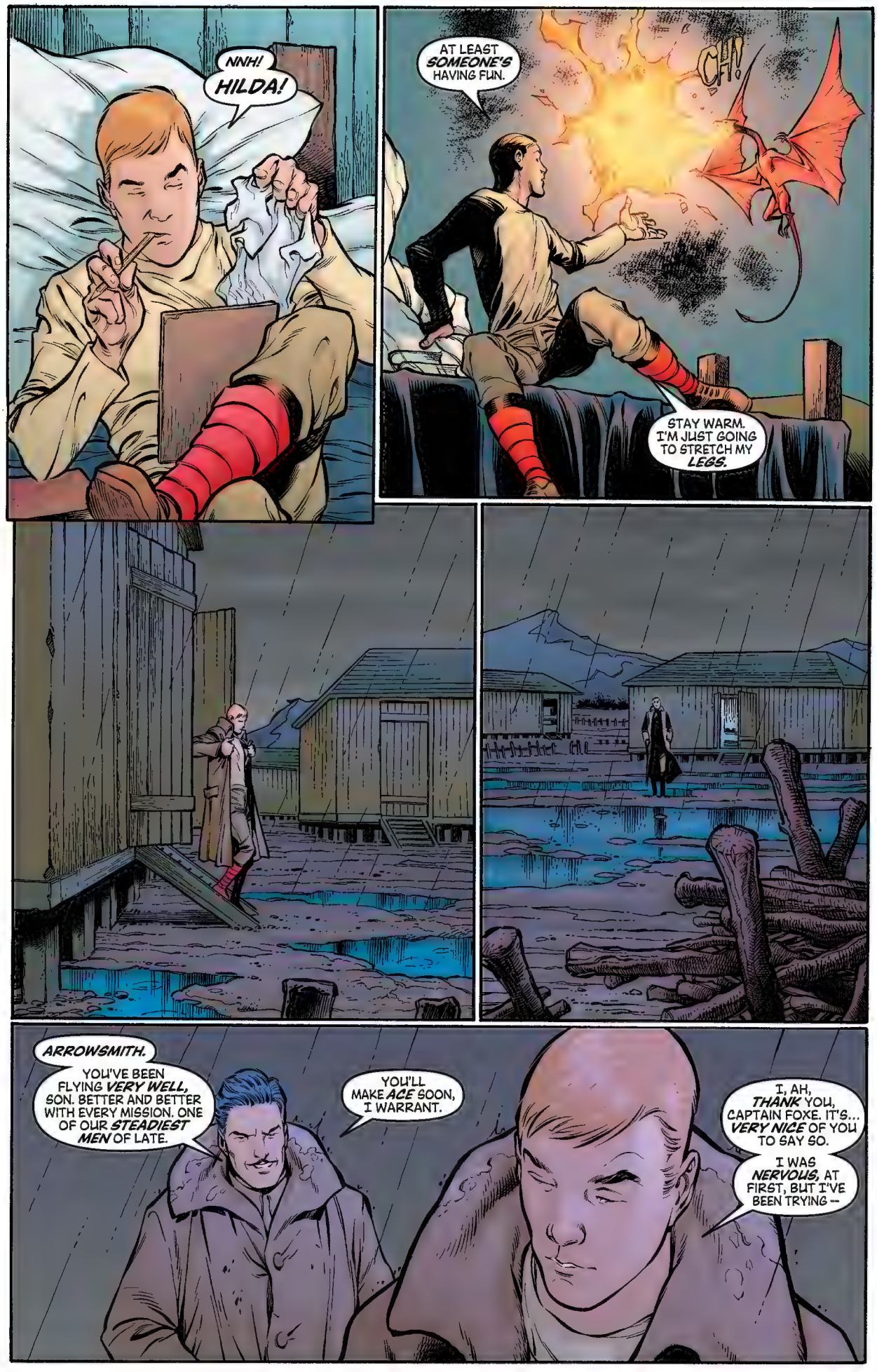
EYES LOOSE, EVERYONE! STAY ALERT!
GOODHEART, BARRON -- THERE'S A HOLE LEEWARD AND ABOVE!
EDWARDS, BEHIND AND BELOW -- FIVE O'CLOCK!
DAVIS --
HSSSSS
KHHH
HAH!
DENKST DU DASS DU EINEN KURVVENKAMPF MIT DEN ALTEN VON DER FLIEGERABTEILUNG 263 MACHEN KANNST UND NOCH LEBST? BLÖDSINNIGER AKADIANER!
AHH!
UND JETZT, NARR SCHLAG' ICH KRÖGERS REKORD--
AH! AH! AH!
ARROWSMITH!
HELP DAVIS -- YOU'RE CLOSEST!
Y-YESSIR! I GOT HIM, I GOT --

NO! HE SWERVED! HE --
CH-CH!
PTAM
FRAM
V-VAS...?
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
NOT SO SMUG NOW, YOU SAUERKRAUT-FOR-BRAINS BASTARD, EH?
JUST HOLD THAT POSE, CHUMMY, WHILE I BLOW YOU INTO A MILLION --
AH-AH. LEAVE IT, DAVIS. THE PRUSSIANS ARE PEELING OFF -- THE RAID IS OVER.
BUT --
HE'S OUT OF THE FIGHT, DAVIS -- ONLY ENOUGH SPELL-RESIDUE TO LET HIM FALL SAFELY.
ARROWSMITH! VERY NICE SHOOTING -- TAKING THE DRAGONET BUT NOT THE MAN!
I MISSED, SIR -- I WAS AIMING FOR --
IT'S RESULTS THAT COUNT, SON. YOUR SWORD.
HIM TODAY, US TOMORROW -- THERE'S NO NEED TO BE BLOODTHIRSTY ABOUT IT. NOW COME ON, LADS -- LET'S GO HOME.

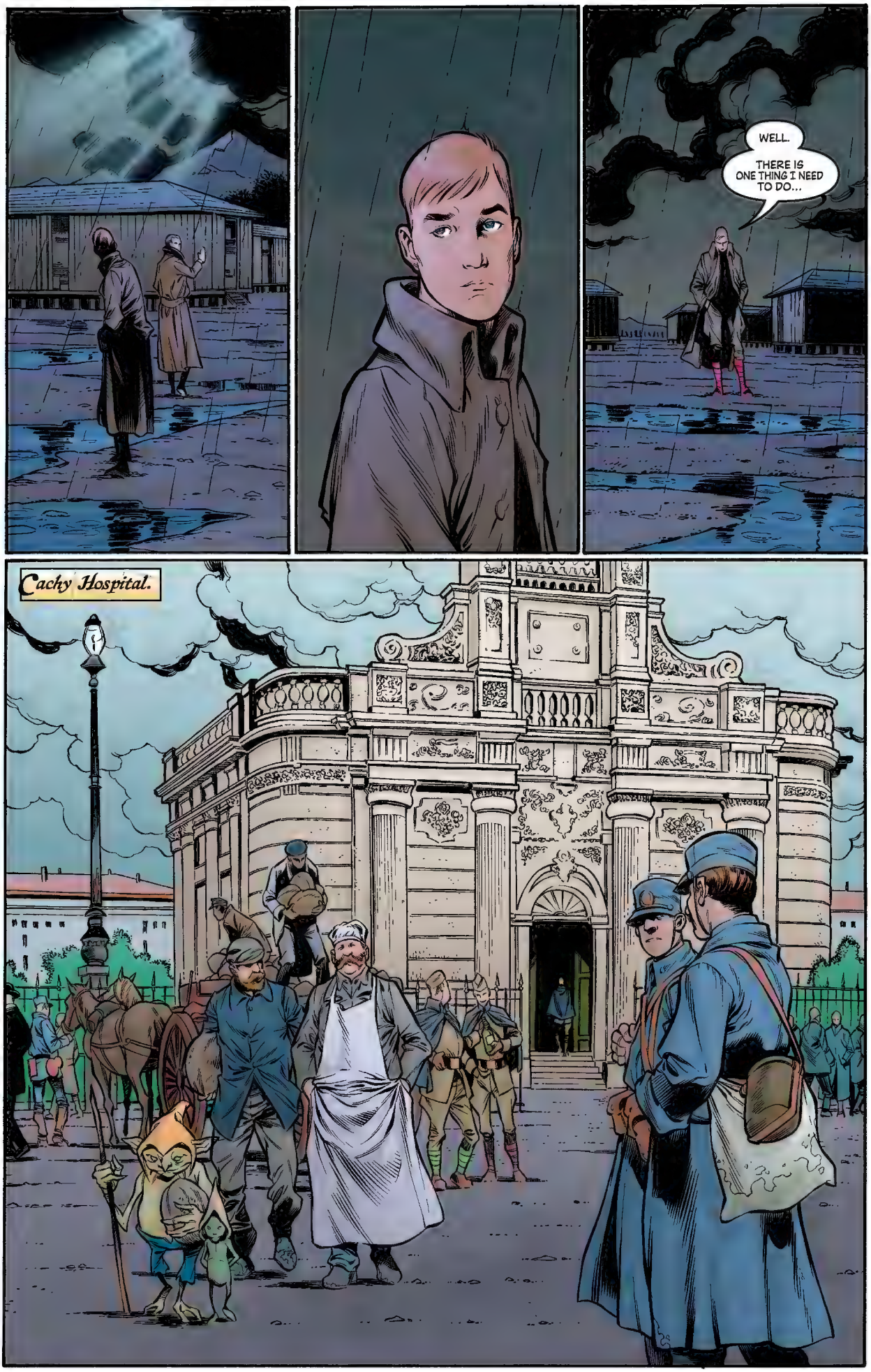
Aerodrome Cachy.
AH, PASSING THE DAY PRODUCTIVELY, I SEE...
GIVE US A KISS, GIVE US A KISS, BY SCRY-GLASS...
HO, FOXE, YOU OLD REPROBATE! GOOD HUNTING TODAY?
BARRON!
EDWARDS! WE SAVED YOU A SEAT --
-- SAVED YOUR MONEY A SEAT, AT LEAST!
THAT WE DID, BERTRAM! WE'VE GOT THREE TONIGHT WHO'VE EARNED A DRINK FROM THE BOTTLE OF DEATH!
GOODHEART'S AN ACE TWICE OVER NOW, AND STEWART AND VAUGHN AS WELL!
ARROWSMITH -- YOU DOWNED A MAN, THOUGH YOU DIDN'T KILL HIM. JOIN US TONIGHT?
I, AH --
THANK YOU, SIR, BUT I'M TIRED. I'LL JUST GET SOME SLEEP.

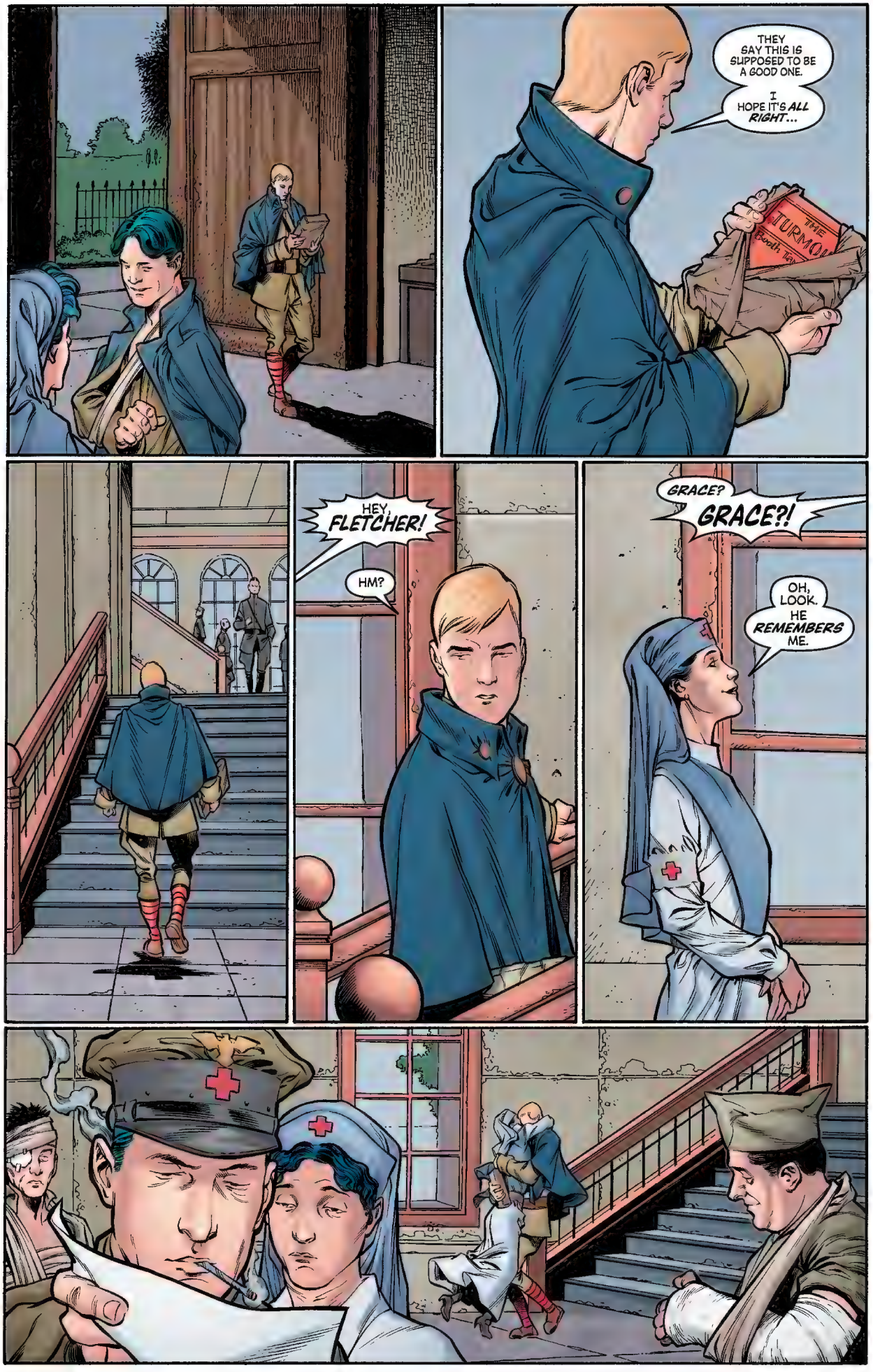

August 15th.
...SO I TOLD THE GENERAL HE WAS THE SORT WHO ATE TRIPE AND GARGLED WITH HIS BEER...
August 22nd.
READ 'EM AND WEEP -- STRAIGHT FLUSH!
August 31st.
HAHAHA HAHAHA
September 5th.
...THAT A GIMLET, BERTIE? GIVE ME THOSE, AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO MIX A...
September 17th.
...BOTTLE OF DEATH FOR YOUNG VAUGHN AGAIN...

September 26th.
ISN'T IT JUST A GLORIOUS DAY? ♪
OH YES, IT LOOKS LIKE RAIN!
ONLY A SHOWER THAT PASSES AWAY...
...AND THEN COMES ON AGAIN!
-- AND SO I COME OUT OF THE CLOUD AND THERE HE IS, FAT AND SLOW AND STUPID --
=HNH=
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU COULD PLAY POKER...
Dear Gretch,
Happy Birthday. Sorry I missed it.
I guess it's hot over there, right? It usually is, this time of year. Not here.
I'm sorry I haven't written in so long, but thins things have been
I'm sorry it's been so long, but it's been very


NNH!
HILDA!
AT LEAST SOMEONE'S HAVING FUN.
CHK!
STAY WARM. I'M JUST GOING TO STRETCH MY LEGS.
ARROWSMITH.
YOU'VE BEEN FLYING VERY WELL, SON. BETTER AND BETTER WITH EVERY MISSION. ONE OF OUR STEADIEST MEN OF LATE.
YOU'LL MAKE ACE SOON, I WARRANT.
I, AH, THANK YOU, CAPTAIN FOXE. IT'S... VERY NICE OF YOU TO SAY SO.
I WAS NERVOUS, AT FIRST, BUT I'VE BEEN TRYING --

-- AND THE ESCADRILLE'S FULL OF GOOD PILOTS. I'VE LEARNED A LOT.
YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN THAT -- FLETCHER, ISN'T IT? WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED, I DOUBTED YOU'D LAST A WEEK. BUT NOW...
TELL ME, FLETCHER. YOU NEVER JOIN THE MEN FOR A DRINK OR A CARD GAME IN THE DAYROOM. YOU NEVER GO TO THE VILLAGE...
IS THAT... AM I DOING SOMETHING WRONG, SIR?
JUST CURIOUS.
I THINK ABOUT IT. BUT -- I CAME HERE WITH A FRIEND, A BOY I GREW UP WITH. WE JOINED UP TOGETHER.
HE'S DEAD, SIR. HE DIED THE FIRST DAY.
AND IT SEEMS -- I DON'T KNOW, WRONG SOMEHOW -- DISRESPECTFUL --
YOUR FRIEND MAY BE DEAD, FLETCHER. BUT YOU? YOU'RE ALIVE, EVEN IF IT DOESN'T MUCH FEEL LIKE IT.
IT WON'T DO HIM -- OR ANYONE -- ANY GOOD IF YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE DEAD, TOO. IT WON'T BRING ANYONE BACK, WON'T EASE YOUR PAIN...
IT'LL JUST WEAR AT YOU UNTIL YOU MAKE A MISTAKE IN FLIGHT. OR WORSE, IN COMBAT.
LISTEN TO ME, ARROWSMITH. YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU'RE ALIVE -- YOU NEED TO LET OFF STEAM, ACT FOOLISH -- IF ONLY TO REMIND YOURSELF WHICH SIDE OF THE GRAVE YOU'RE ON.
AFTER ALL, WE MAY ALL BE ON THE OTHER SOON ENOUGH.
THE RAIN SHOULD END BY AFTERNOON. SOME OF US ARE HEADED INTO THE VILLAGE. JOIN US. HAVE A DRINK, LOOK AT A GIRL. YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.

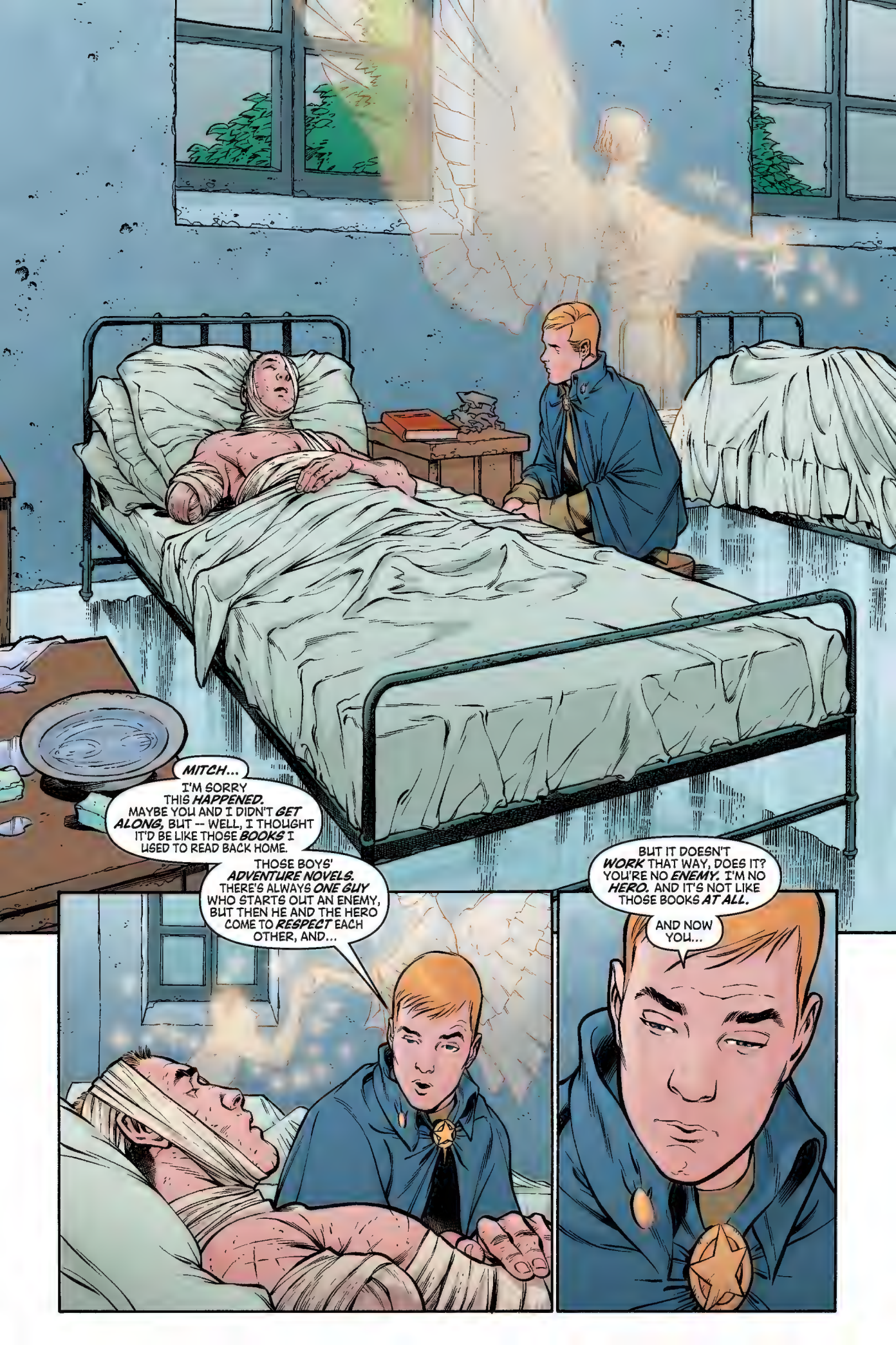

WELL.
THERE IS ONE THING I NEED TO DO...
Cachy Hospital.

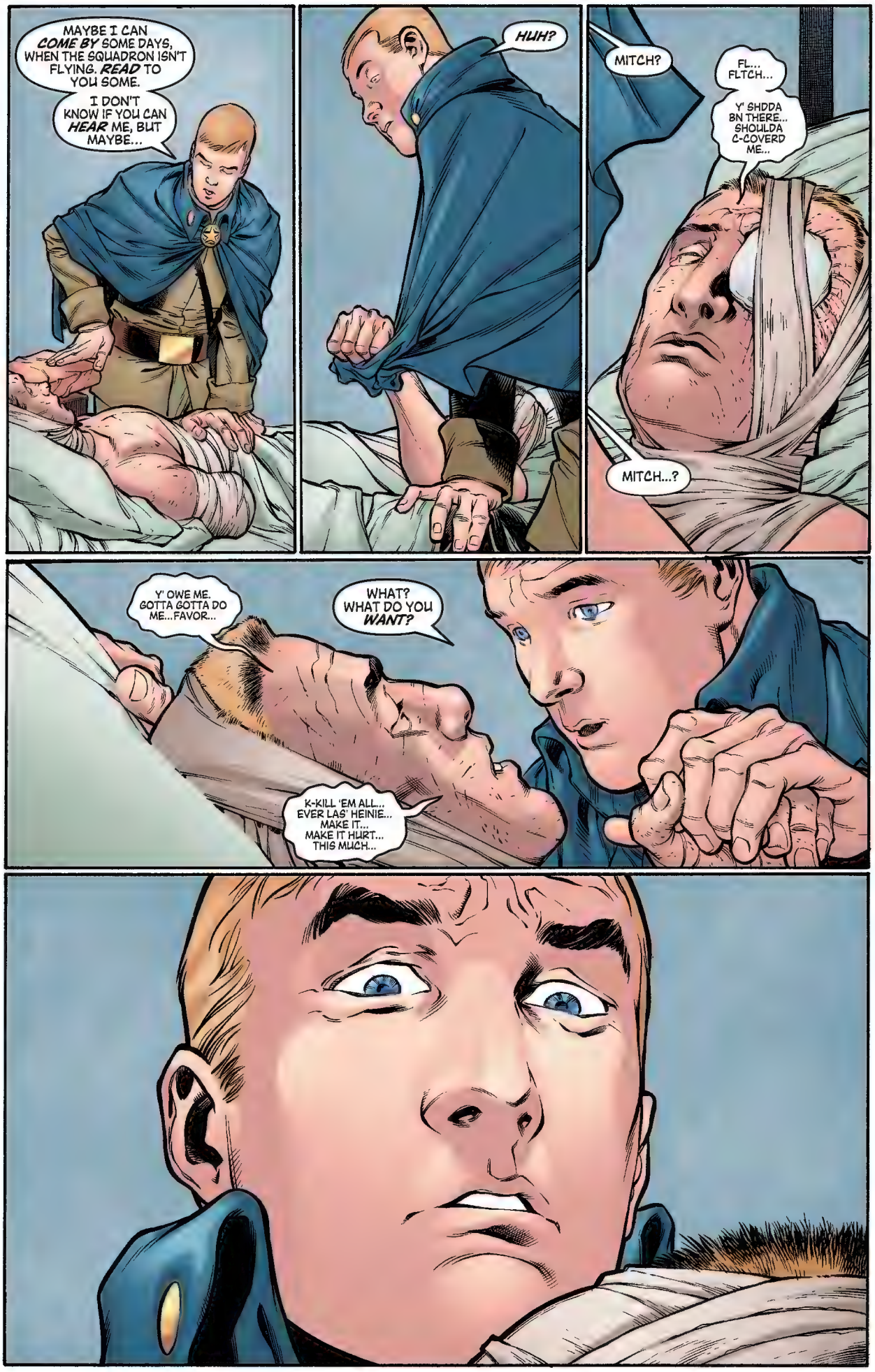

THEY SAY THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A GOOD ONE.
I HOPE IT'S ALL RIGHT...
THE TURMOIL
Booth Tarkington
HEY, FLETCHER!
HM?
GRACE?
GRACE?!
OH, LOOK. HE REMEMBERS ME.

-- AND I'VE BEEN STATIONED HERE EVER SINCE!
AND THEY MAKE YOU DRESS LIKE THAT?
BELIEVE ME, WHEN I'M OUT IN THE AMBULANCE, THERE ARE DUNGAREES UNDER THIS THING.
WE SHOULD GO GET --
A DRINK? SOLD. BUT BEFORE THAT --
-- THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE I RAN INTO. I THINK YOU MIGHT KNOW HIM...
HUH?
ROCKY!
VLETCH-BOY!
ROCKY, I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND YOUR ARM, IT'S...
IS NOTTING. GRENADE BOOM CHUNK OUT -- DE DOCS, DEY VILL IT WIT' CONGRETE, IT HEALING FINE.
SO...
"...ABOUT THAT DRINK."
ZOMBIES? FOR TRUE?
YES -- I WAS PICKING UP WOUNDED NEAR THE FRONT LINES, AND THERE WAS A BREAKTHROUGH. THE PRUSSIANS SET OFF A ZOMBIE SPELL, THE DEAD ROSE...
IF THE AMBULANCE HADN'T OVERTURNED, I'M SURE I'D BE DEAD. I WAS UNDERNEATH -- SOMETIMES I CAN STILL HEAR THEM CLAWING FOR ME.
BUT AT LEAST THAT ENDED. THE WORST PART IS GETTING NO SLEEP. AND I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE TWO MONTHS! I DON'T KNOW HOW PEOPLE STAND IT!
ALL I THINK ABOUT, SOMETIMES, IS HOME. MY OWN BED...
ROCKY, GRACE -- I'M SO SORRY. YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE, EITHER OF YOU. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE SUGGESTED --
ESPECIALLY TO YOU, ROCKY, THOSE THINGS I SAID...

NA, NA. YOU WAS RIGHT, VLETCH. DAT WHY I JOIN UP.
DESE PEOPLE, DIS WAR -- DEY GOT TO BE STOPPED. T'INGS IS GETTING VER' BAD.
MY PEOPLE, DEY SAYING -- DE OLD GODS, DE GODS OF DE NORT -- DEY UPSET 'BOUT DIS WAR. IT HURT DE LAND. HURT DEM.
IT GOT TO BE ENDED -- BEFORE TOO MUCH HURTING DONE TO FIX.
THE GODS...OF THE NORTH?
HOW DOES IT...?
SAY, ARROWSMITH! GOOD TO SEE YOU OUT AND ABOUT, SON!
CAPTAIN FOXE!
GRACE, ROCKY, THIS IS --
NO, NO -- DON'T GET UP. YOU'RE NOT ON DUTY, AND WHO AM I TO INTERRUPT A PLEASANT AFTERNOON WITH FRIENDS?
DON'T BELIEVE HIS LIES, YOU TWO. HE'S ONLY SAVED THE WHOLE SQUADRON THREE TIMES, NOT TEN --
-- AND HE'D ONLY HAVE SEVEN POUR LE MERITE MEDALS IF HIS COMMANDING OFFICER WASN'T HALF BLIND.
HOPE TO SEE YOU LATER THIS EVENING, FLETCHER. BRING YOUR FRIENDS.

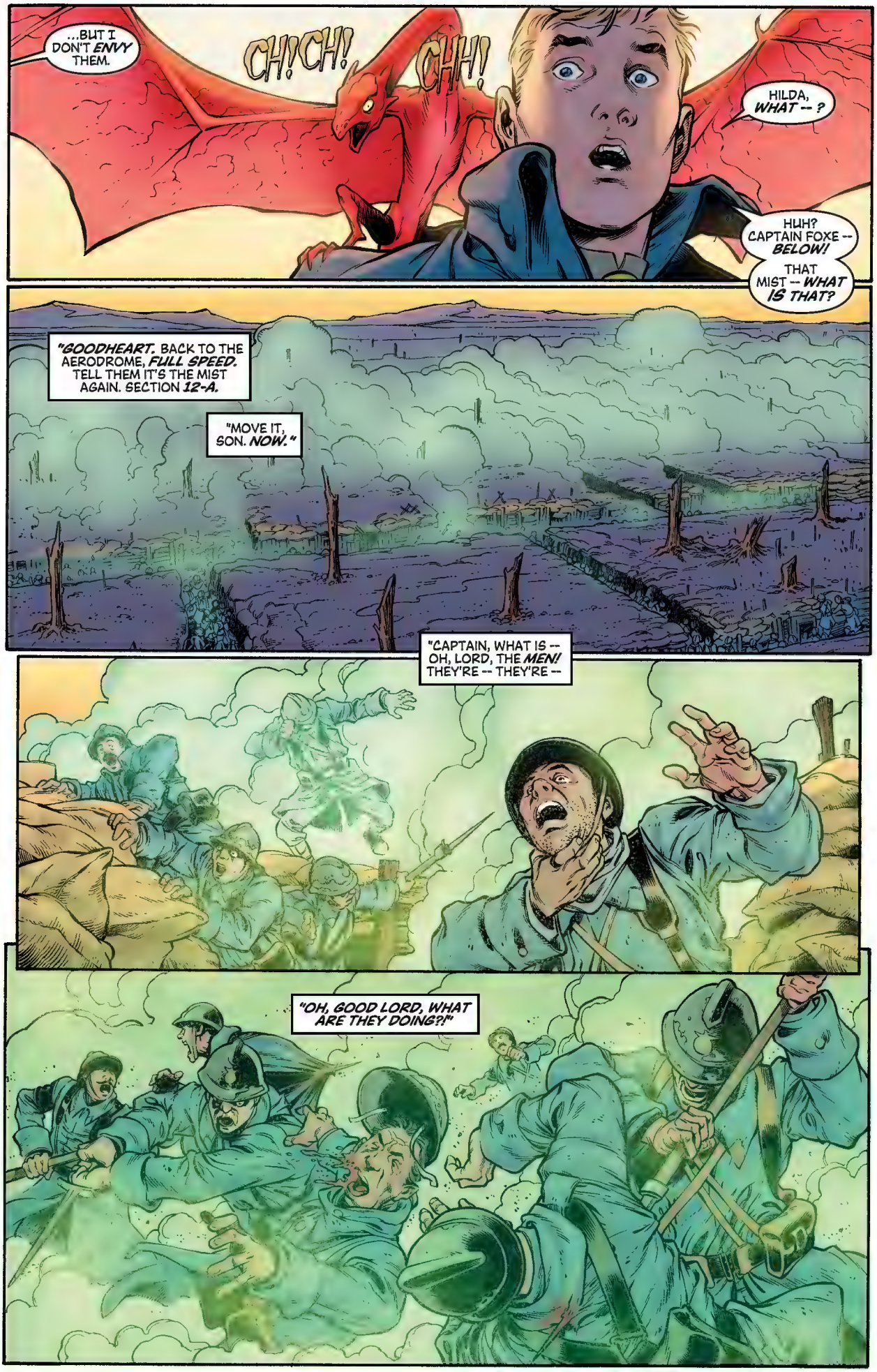
WELL.
HE'S...QUITE SOMETHING, ISN'T HE?
I CAN'T DISAGREE, GRACE. WHEN I WANTED TO JOIN UP, THAT'S WHAT I DREAMED OF BEING -- JUST LIKE HIM.
HE'S THE BEST WE HAVE.
EVEN NOW, MOSTLY WHAT I DO IS WATCH HIM IN THE AIR, TRY TO DO WHAT HE DOES.
HEH.
HE'S BEEN TELLING ME I NEED TO LIGHTEN UP. NOT BE SO SERIOUS ALL THE TIME...
WELL, MAYBE HE'S RIGHT.
AND IF YOU'RE IMITATING HIM IN THE AIR, AND IT'S WORKING OUT...
...IT MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A BAD IDEA TO IMITATE HIM ON THE GROUND, AS WELL.
TRUE, TRUE.
LOOK, IT'S BEEN GREAT SEEING YOU BOTH -- REALLY GREAT -- AND WE SHOULD MEET UP AGAIN FOR DINNER LATER --
-- BUT RIGHT NOW --
-- I HAVE SOMETHING I NEED TO DO.


MITCH...
I'M SORRY THIS HAPPENED. MAYBE YOU AND I DIDN'T GET ALONG, BUT -- WELL, I THOUGHT IT'D BE LIKE THOSE BOOKS I USED TO READ BACK HOME.
THOSE BOYS' ADVENTURE NOVELS. THERE'S ALWAYS ONE GUY WHO STARTS OUT AN ENEMY, BUT THEN HE AND THE HERO COME TO RESPECT EACH OTHER, AND...
BUT IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY, DOES IT? YOU'RE NO ENEMY. I'M NO HERO. AND IT'S NOT LIKE THOSE BOOKS AT ALL.
AND NOW YOU...


MAYBE I CAN *COME BY* SOME DAYS, WHEN THE SQUADRON ISN'T FLYING. *READ* TO YOU SOME.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN *HEAR* ME, BUT MAYBE...
HUH?
MITCH?
FL... FLTCH...
Y' SHDDA BN THERE... SHOULDA C-COVERD ME...
MITCH...?
Y' OWE ME. GOTTA GOTTA DO ME...FAVOR...
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU *WANT?*
K-KILL 'EM ALL... EVER LAS' HEINIE... MAKE IT... MAKE IT HURT... THIS MUCH...

AND HEY PRESTO -- THAT'S ONE LESS SUPPLY LINE THE CENTRAL POWERS CAN USE.
NOW LET'S GET BACK TO THE OTHERS -- THEY'VE HELD THE PRUSSIANS OFF LONG ENOUGH, HM? NICE BOMBARDMENT, BY THE WAY. KEEP IMPROVING LIKE THIS, YOU'LL HAVE MY JOB.
AH, THANK YOU, SIR...
...BUT I... DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET USED TO ALL THIS.
GOOD.
LET'S HOPE NONE OF US DO.

LOOK. THE *FORWARD TRENCHES.*
LOOKS LIKE THEY JUST HAD A *BATTLE.* THEY'RE STILL RECOVERING...
I DON'T *ENVY* THEM.
THEY HAVE TO *FIGHT* FOR THE GROUND WE FLY OVER. EVERY FOOT, EVERY *INCH* OF IT PAID FOR WITH BLOOD.
I *ADMIRE* THEM FOR IT, RESPECT THEM BEYOND *MEASURE*...


...BUT I DON'T *ENVY* THEM.
CH!CH!
CHH!
HILDA, *WHAT* -- ?
HUH? CAPTAIN FOXE -- *BELOW!*
THAT MIST -- *WHAT IS THAT?*
"*GOODHEART.* BACK TO THE AERODROME, *FULL SPEED.* TELL THEM IT'S THE MIST AGAIN. SECTION *12-A.*
"MOVE IT, SON. *NOW.*"
"CAPTAIN, WHAT IS -- OH, LORD, THE *MEN!* THEY'RE -- THEY'RE --
"OH, GOOD LORD, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!"

IT'S CALLED A "MIST OF RAVENING," ARROWSMITH. IT'S NEW -- I'VE READ ABOUT IT IN REPORTS, BUT NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
IT TURNS MEN INTO VIRTUAL BEASTS -- VIOLENT ANIMALS. THEY TURN ON EACH OTHER, WEAKENING THE LINE --
-- AND THEN THE PRUSSIANS SEND IN A VAMPIRE SQUAD TO KILL OFF THE SURVIVORS.
THEY'RE -- THEY --
WE'VE GOT TO GET DOWN THERE -- GET THEM OUT OF THAT!
QUICKLY! WE CAN --
NO, SON -- WE CAN'T. WE HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST THE MIST -- OUR WIZARDS ARE WORKING ON IT, BUT NOTHING YET. IT'D JUST TURN US, TOO.
ALL WE CAN DO IS REPORT IT -- CALL IN MAGES TO DISPERSE THE MIST, DRIVE OFF THE VAMPIRES.
BUT IT -- HOW CAN THEY DO THIS?!
IT'S HELLISH! INHUMAN!
YES. YES, IT IS.
AND THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THEM, FLETCHER.
THEY'LL UNLEASH ANY INSANE, VICIOUS, MONSTROUS SPELL OR POTION THEY CAN CREATE, AND THAT'S WHY THEY HAVE TO BE STOPPED.
BUT US -- EVEN IF OUR WIZARDS HAD THE SORT OF MINDS THAT COULD EVEN THINK OF SUCH THINGS --

"-- WE WOULD NEVER, NEVER USE THEM."
SO. IT WORKS, THEN? IT'S BEEN FULLY TESTED?
THIS WAS THE FOURTH TEST UNDER CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT.
=SIGH=
VERY WELL, THEN...
...BEGIN PREPARATIONS FOR COMBAT USE.

CHAPTER FIVE

Atrocity

Aerodrome Cachy.
October 1915
Dear Rocky,
I don't know where you are these days, whether you're back with your unit, whether you're even alive.
HO, LADS!
ROLL OUT, ALL! TIME TO EARN OUR PAY AGAIN!
I don't think this'll reach you anyway. The military censors won't let this on through to anyone.
NNH I SWEAR, THE NIGHTS GET SHORTER AND SHORTER...
TOO MUCH CHAMPAGNE, DICKIE.
YOU NEED TO STAY IN YOUR BARRACKS, READ YOUR BIBLE LIKE THE CLEAN YOUNG MAN YOUR MA STILL THINKS YOU ARE...
But I have to write it down, have to get it on paper. And you're the only one who'll really understand.
It started like any other day...
CAREFUL WITH THAT, FLETCH. IF I GO UP, I'D RATHER IT WAS SOMEONE I DON'T LIKE DID IT.
NOT THAT IT'D MATTER MUCH, IN THE LONG RUN...

It wasn't, though. It wasn't.
IS THIS IT, CAPTAIN FOXE? THE BIG ONE?
IT'S JUST A JOB, LAD.
THEY'RE ALL JUST JOBS. WE DO WHAT WE'RE TOLD, WE COME HOME, WE GO INTO THE VILLAGE FOR DRINKS.
THERE'S A NEW SHIPMENT OF NURSES DUE AT THE HOSPITAL TODAY -- SO MAYBE EVEN YOU CAN GET A DATE TONIGHT, PHILIP!
GATHER CLOSE, ALL, AND SHIELD YOUR EYES. I'M TRIGGERING THE CLOAKING SPELL.
THE DAZZLE WON'T LAST --
-- BUT THE ENEMY WON'T SEE US, NOT FOR AN HOUR OR TWO...
It was supposed to be just another job, like Foxe said.
But I kept thinking about the other night.

THAT'S IT, GRACE, *THE ACADÉMIE MILITAIRE -- L'ÉCOLE DE SORCELLERIE EXPÉRIMENTALE.*

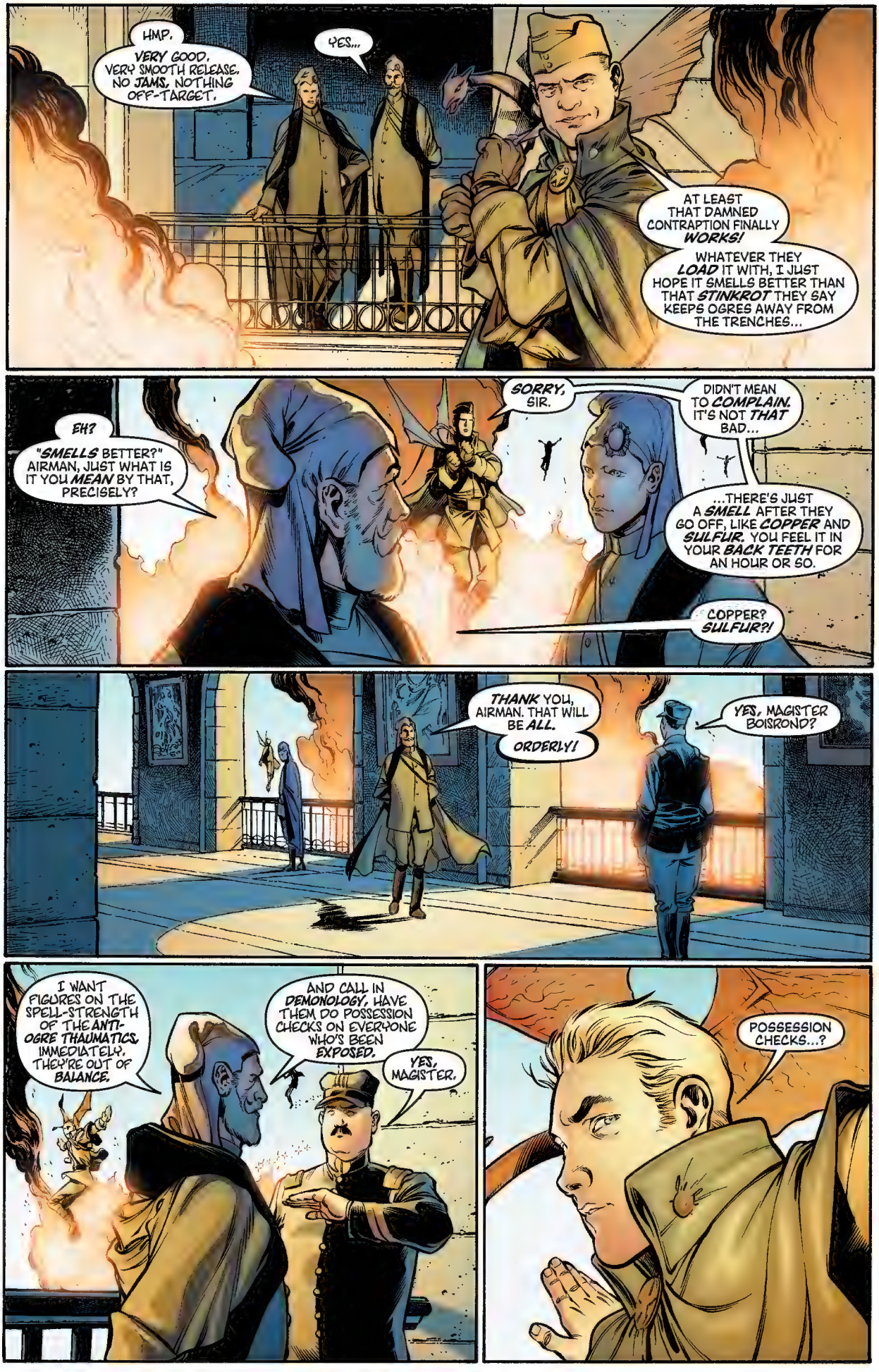
MY HOME AWAY FROM *HOME*, THESE LAST FEW DAYS.

I had a pass, so Grace and I had an evening out, in Paris.

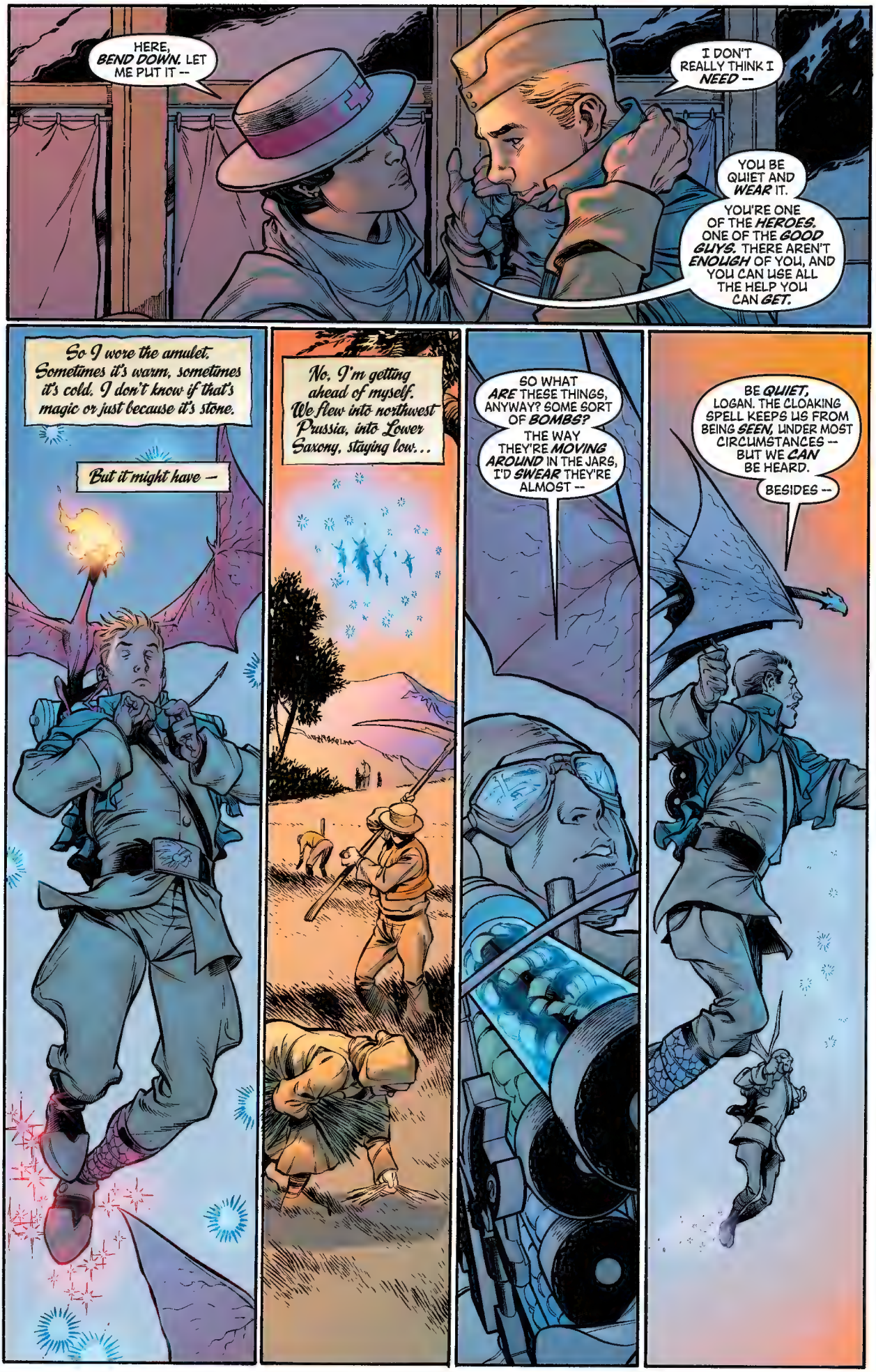
She looked tired. They'd been working the ambulance corps awfully hard, but it wasn't just that. It was something in her eyes — the things she'd seen.

I wish I could have shown her Paris the way it was supposed to be. I wish I knew what Paris was supposed to be...

WE'VE BEEN TRAINING THERE FOR A *MISSION.* THEY WON'T TELL US MUCH ABOUT IT...
WELL.
AT LEAST YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE *SENIOR WIZARDRY CORPS,* RIGHT?
THEY'RE THE BEST *ALBION* AND *GALLIA* HAVE TO OFFER. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE *DOING.*
DO THEY?
I SUPPOSE THIS IS ALL *TOP SECRET,* AND I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU ANYTHING, BUT SOMETHING *HAPPENED* THIS MORNING.
WE WERE TESTING THE *LAUNCHERS...*
WATCH YOUR *TRIGGER-WORDS,* BOYS!
THESE ARE ONLY PARAFFIN TEST-CHARGES, BUT THEY'RE STILL *LIVE!*
AAAAAND...
LAUNCH!
PAFF
PAFF
PAFF
PAFF


HMP. VERY GOOD. VERY SMOOTH RELEASE. NO JAMS, NOTHING OFF-TARGET.
YES...
AT LEAST THAT DAMNED CONTRAPTION FINALLY WORKS!
WHATEVER THEY LOAD IT WITH, I JUST HOPE IT SMELLS BETTER THAN THAT STINKROT THEY SAY KEEPS OGRES AWAY FROM THE TRENCHES...
EH? "SMELLS BETTER?" AIRMAN, JUST WHAT IS IT YOU MEAN BY THAT, PRECISELY?
SORRY, SIR.
DIDN'T MEAN TO COMPLAIN. IT'S NOT THAT BAD...
...THERE'S JUST A SMELL AFTER THEY GO OFF, LIKE COPPER AND SULFUR. YOU FEEL IT IN YOUR BACK TEETH FOR AN HOUR OR SO.
COPPER? SULFUR?!
THANK YOU, AIRMAN. THAT WILL BE ALL.
ORDERLY!
YES, MAGISTER BOISROND?
I WANT FIGURES ON THE SPELL-STRENGTH OF THE ANTI-OGRE THAUMATICS, IMMEDIATELY. THEY'RE OUT OF BALANCE.
AND CALL IN DEMONOLOGY. HAVE THEM DO POSSESSION CHECKS ON EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN EXPOSED.
YES, MAGISTER.
POSSESSION CHECKS...?

I DON'T THINK I WAS SUPPOSED TO HEAR THAT -- AND MY GALLIC ISN'T THAT GOOD YET ANYWAY. BUT I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THE WIZARDRY CORPS.
YES, THEY'RE THE BEST, BUT THEY'RE USED TO STUDYING THINGS FOR DECADES...OR CENTURIES. THESE MASS-PRODUCED SPELLS, AND NEW WEAPONS...
I THINK THEY'RE JUST MAKING THINGS UP AS THEY GO ALONG...
LE TEMPS DE PARIS
THEY'RE JUST DOING WHAT THEY HAVE TO TO WIN THIS AWFUL WAR. AND IT'S GOT TO BE WON, FLETCHER.
THE PRUSSIANS, THE TYROLIANS, THEY'RE MONSTERS. MONSTERS!
WHAT THEY DO...
SOME OF THE WOUNDED I'VE PICKED UP -- HIT BY INFERNAL SPELLS, TORN APART BY FOUL CREATURES...
JUST LAST WEEK, WE TRIED TO RETRIEVE A SQUAD THAT HAD BEEN ATTACKED.
THEY WERE YOUNGER THAN WE ARE, AND THEY WERE IN SUCH PAIN. AND WHEN WE TRIED TO LOAD THEM INTO THE AMBULANCES, THEY JUST...
...THEY FELL APART...
GRACE...
I KNOW IT'S BAD, GRACE. BUT YOU'RE A VOLUNTEER, YOU CAN GO HOME...
THAT WON'T STOP IT, WILL IT? THAT'LL JUST MEAN SOMEONE ELSE HAS TO DEAL WITH IT. NO, I'LL STAY. DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP US WIN.
OH, FLETCH -- I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.
ROCKY HAD TO GO, TO REJOIN HIS UNIT...
...BUT HE LEFT THIS FOR YOU.
HE KEPT SAYING THE GODS ARE TROUBLED, UNHAPPY...
...AND HE WANTED YOU TO BE PROTECTED.


HERE, BEND DOWN. LET ME PUT IT --
I DON'T REALLY THINK I NEED --
YOU BE QUIET AND WEAR IT.
YOU'RE ONE OF THE HEROES. ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS. THERE AREN'T ENOUGH OF YOU, AND YOU CAN USE ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET.
So I wore the amulet. Sometimes it's warm, sometimes it's cold. I don't know if that's magic or just because it's stone.
But it might have --
No. I'm getting ahead of myself. We flew into northwest Prussia, into Lower Saxony, staying low...
SO WHAT ARE THESE THINGS, ANYWAY? SOME SORT OF BOMBS?
THE WAY THEY'RE MOVING AROUND IN THE JARS, I'D SWEAR THEY'RE ALMOST --
BE QUIET, LOGAN. THE CLOAKING SPELL KEEPS US FROM BEING SEEN, UNDER MOST CIRCUMSTANCES -- BUT WE CAN BE HEARD.
BESIDES --

"--OUR TARGET'S IN *SIGHT.*"

THAT'S IT? THAT'S *HOLBRÜCK?* IT'S...IT'S A *PRETTY TOWN.*

DON'T LET LOOKS *DECEIVE* YOU, LOGAN.

THE CHURCH -- SEE THE *WIZARDS* OUT FRONT? IT'S A *WEAPONS-RESEARCH* CENTER, WHERE THEY MAKE PACTS WITH *DEMONS* AND *DARK GODS.*

THE TOWN *AND* THE WAR WILL BE BETTER WITH IT GONE.

NOW FORWARD, MEN --

-- AND *LAUNCH!*

We did as ordered. The launch harnesses worked perfectly.

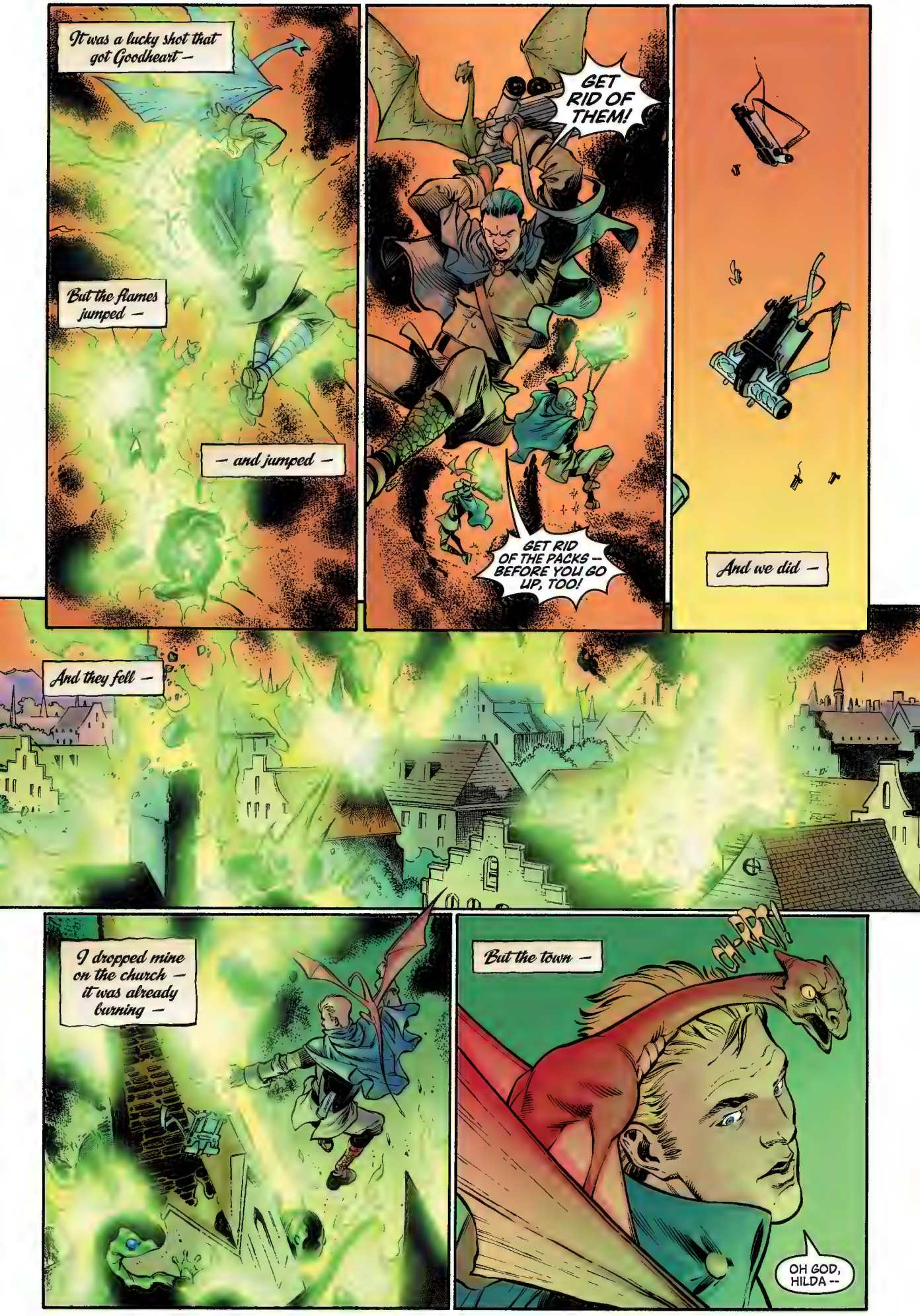
The cylinders fell --

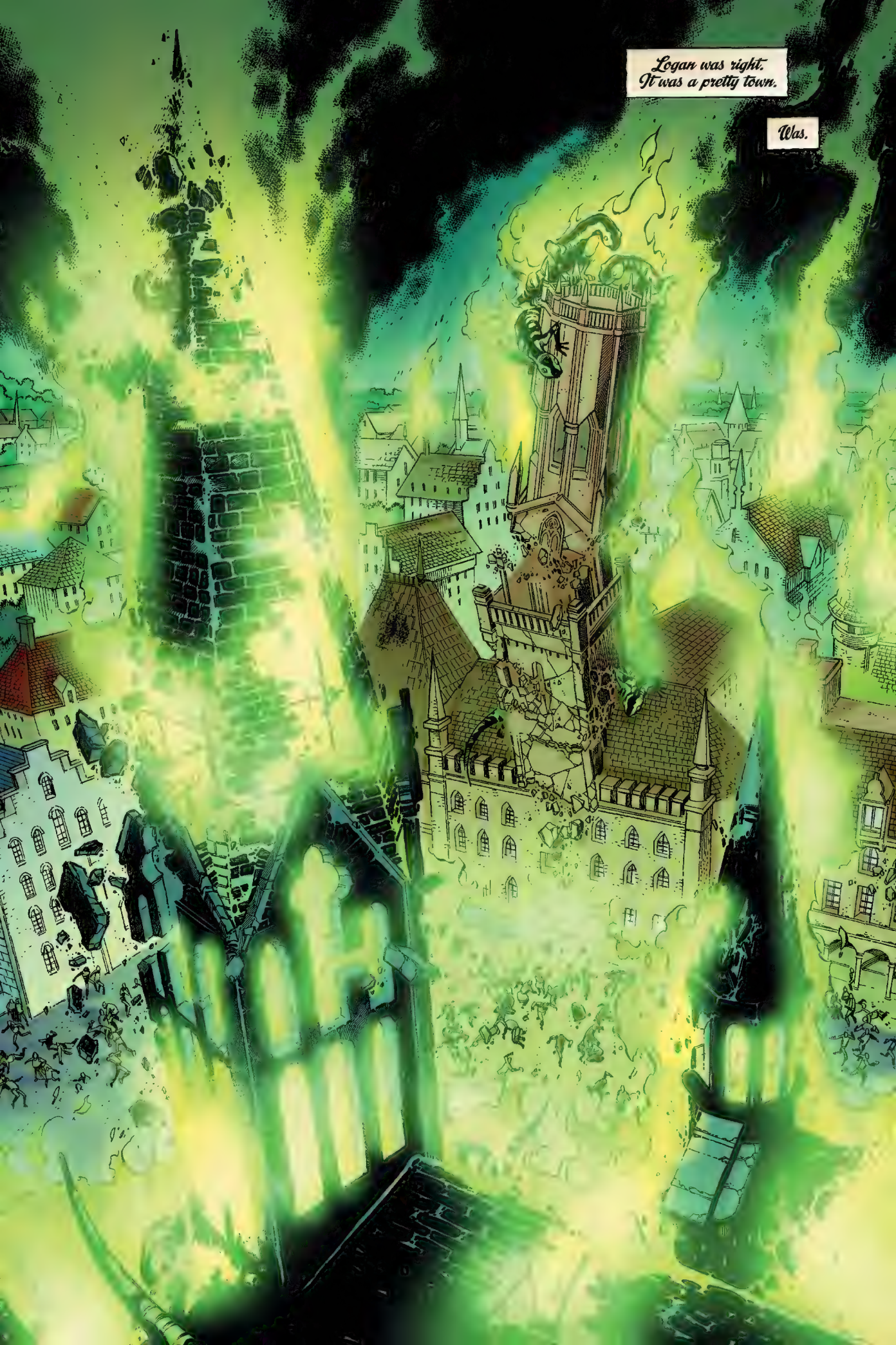
WAS IST --?

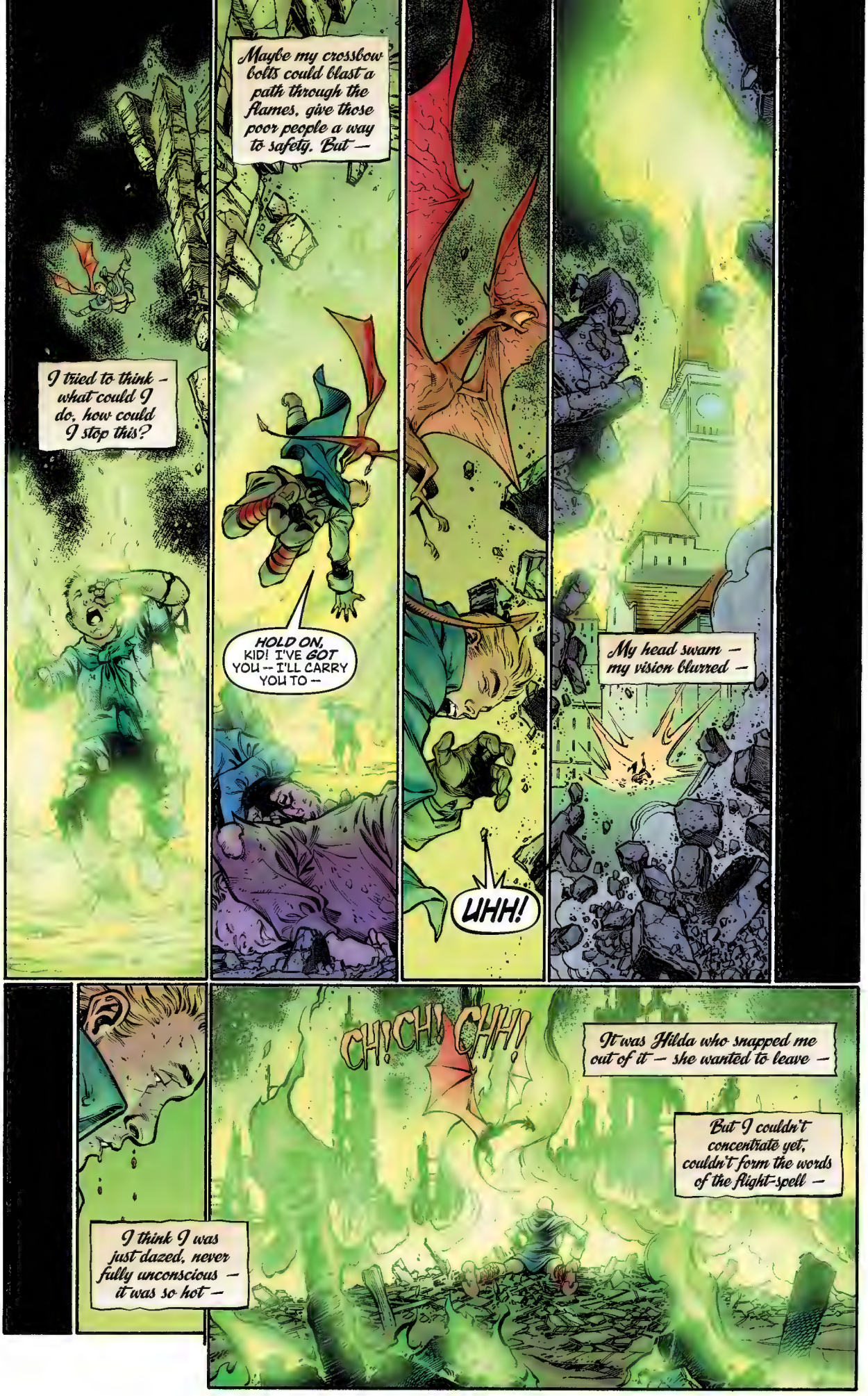
ICH EMPFINDE EINE KRAFT -- EINEN BODENLOSEN HUNGER -- FEUER --

— and when they hit —
KSSH
KSH
AAAH!
AAAAAAAH!
AAAH!
OH MY GOD --

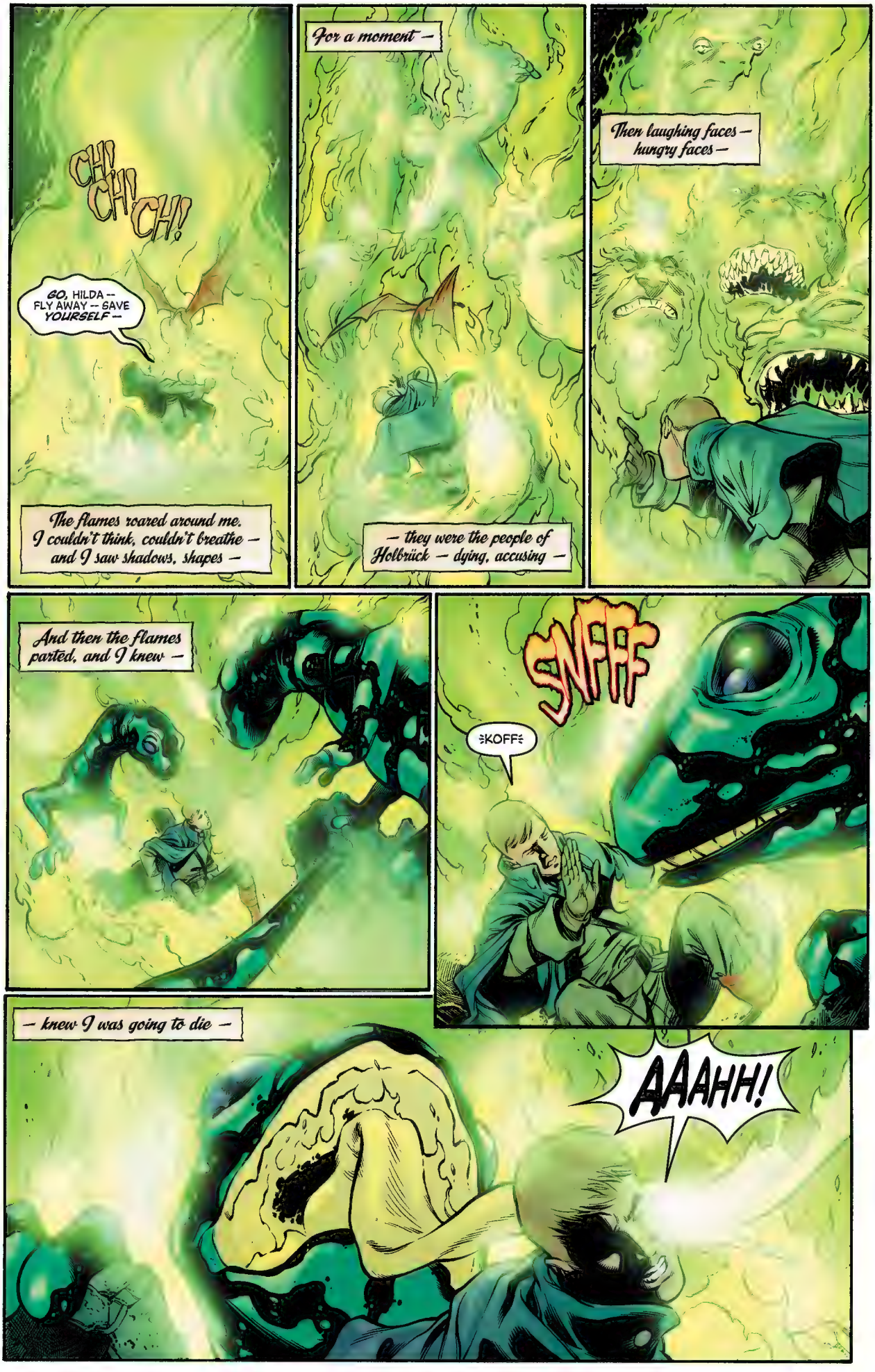
The jars — they were salamanders — fire elementals —
MY LORD --
NO TIME FOR SIGHTSEEING, LADS! SWING AROUND AGAIN --
-- MAKE ANOTHER PASS!
DIE KIRCHE -- DAS LABORATORIUM --
WAS --
ICH HÖRE ETWAS! UND ES RIESELT -- IM RAUCH --
DIE GALLIENEN -- ES MUSS DIE GALLIENEN SEIN! ZUM TEUFEL MIT IHNEN -- UND IHRE GEMEINE, TEUFELVEREHRENDE KETZEREI!
LOSSCHIESSEN! LOSSCHIESSEN!
BLAM BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
HA!
THEY'RE FIRING BLIND! THEY CAN'T SEE US WORTH A --
NO.
KRAK


It was a lucky shot that got Goodheart —
But the flames jumped —
— and jumped —
GET RID OF THEM!
GET RID OF THE PACKS -- BEFORE YOU GO UP, TOO!
And we did —
And they fell —
I dropped mine on the church — it was already burning —
But the town —
CPRK!
OH GOD, HILDA --

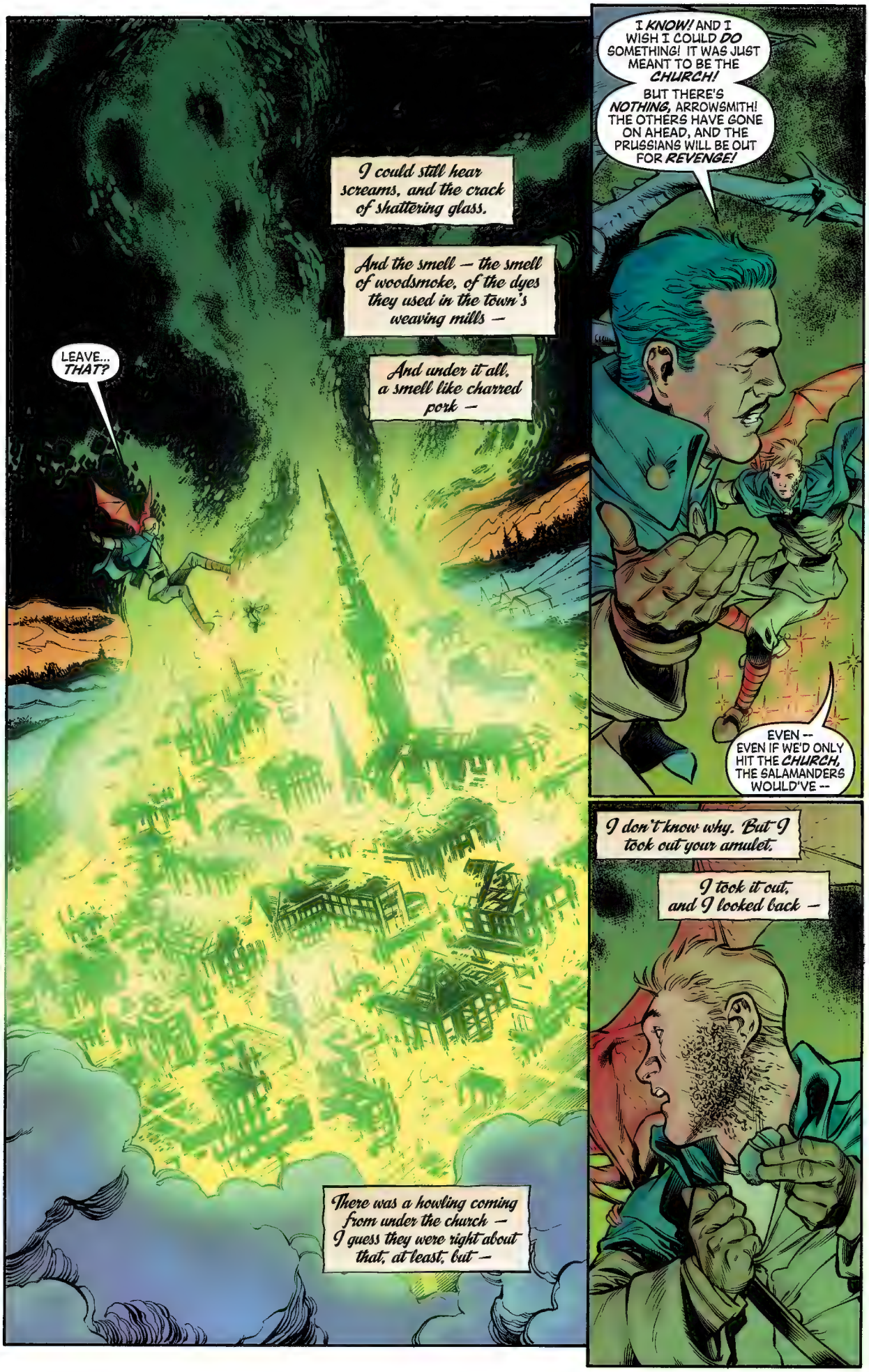

Logan was right.
It was a pretty town.
Was.


I tried to think – what could I do, how could I stop this?
Maybe my crossbow bolts could blast a path through the flames, give those poor people a way to safety. But –
HOLD ON, KID! I'VE GOT YOU -- I'LL CARRY YOU TO –
UHH!
My head swam – my vision blurred –
CH!CH! CHH!
It was Hilda who snapped me out of it – she wanted to leave –
But I couldn't concentrate yet, couldn't form the words of the flight-spell –
I think I was just dazed, never fully unconscious – it was so hot –

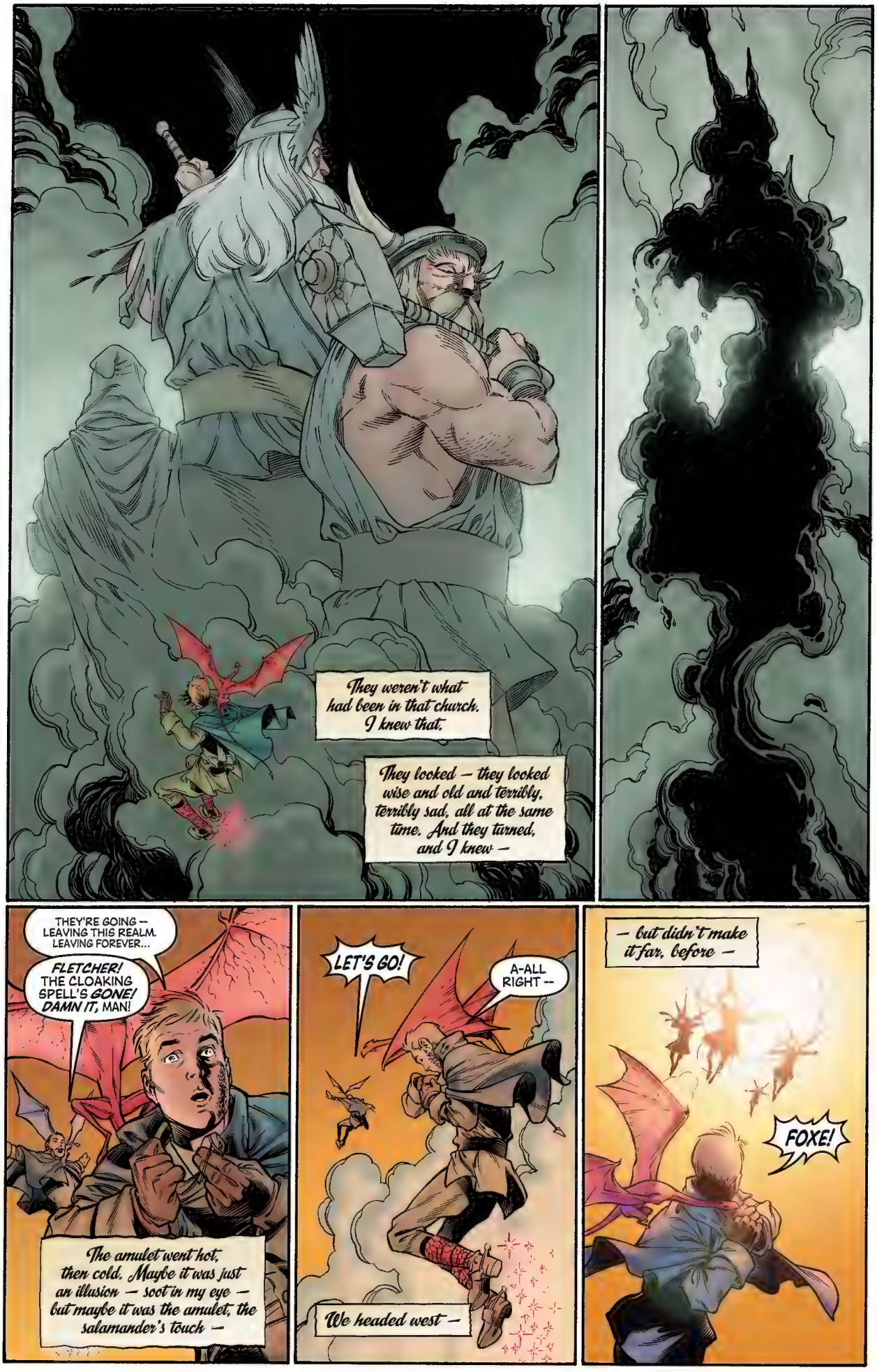
I wondered — was this waht our wizards meant to happen? Did things just get out of control?
Did it make a difference?
We were supposed to be the good ones. The righteous ones. The ones who didn't do things like this. That's what they told us.
But I saw —
And I saw —
OH DEAR GOD —
I — I HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN. I DID THIS —


CH! CH! CH!
GO, HILDA -- FLY AWAY -- SAVE YOURSELF --
The flames roared around me. I couldn't think, couldn't breathe — and I saw shadows, shapes —
For a moment —
— they were the people of Holbrück — dying, accusing —
Then laughing faces — hungry faces —
And then the flames parted, and I knew —
SNFFF
KOFF
— knew I was going to die —
AAAHH!

HHHH?
HH!
COME ON, LAD!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR A NAP! FLY!
FLY!
BLAST IT, YOUR DRAGON'S HERE, YOU'RE CONSCIOUS -- I SAID FLY, DAMN YOU!
CHU CHU
My lungs felt seared -- my face hurt so much --
But I remembered the words, the thoughts, the gestures --
AVEUS DRACONIS
THERE! GOOD! NOW LET'S GO!
YOU MEAN JUST -- JUST --
-- LEAVE?


I could still hear screams, and the crack of shattering glass.
And the smell — the smell of woodsmoke, of the dyes they used in the town's weaving mills —
And under it all, a smell like charred pork —
LEAVE... THAT?
There was a howling coming from under the church — I guess they were right about that, at least, but —
I KNOW! AND I WISH I COULD DO SOMETHING! IT WAS JUST MEANT TO BE THE CHURCH!
BUT THERE'S NOTHING, ARROWSMITH! THE OTHERS HAVE GONE ON AHEAD, AND THE PRUSSIANS WILL BE OUT FOR REVENGE!
EVEN -- EVEN IF WE'D ONLY HIT THE CHURCH, THE SALAMANDERS WOULD'VE --
I don't know why. But I took out your amulet.
I took it out, and I looked back —

And the smoke — it rose dark and thick, rolling in on itself like something solid —
And in the smoke —
THE GODS! ROCKY'S GODS — THE GODS OF THE NORTH!
FOXE — DO YOU SEE THEM?
SEE WHO? FLETCHER —


They weren't what had been in that church. I knew that.
They looked — they looked wise and old and terribly, terribly sad, all at the same time. And they turned, and I knew —
THEY'RE GOING — LEAVING THIS REALM. LEAVING FOREVER...
FLETCHER! THE CLOAKING SPELL'S GONE! DAMN IT, MAN!
The amulet went hot, then cold. Maybe it was just an illusion — soot in my eye — but maybe it was the amulet, the salamander's touch —
LET'S GO!
A-ALL RIGHT --
We headed west —
— but didn't make it far, before —
FOXE!

PRUSSIANS, EH? I KNEW IT!
BREAK OFF, FLETCHER -- YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO FIGHT! HEAD WEST -- I'LL HOLD THEM OFF, THEN LEAD THEM A MERRY --
NO -- NO, I CAN --

But I couldn't. I was still too shaky. I moved too slowly, too sluggishly, almost like I was asleep. One of them flashed by me —

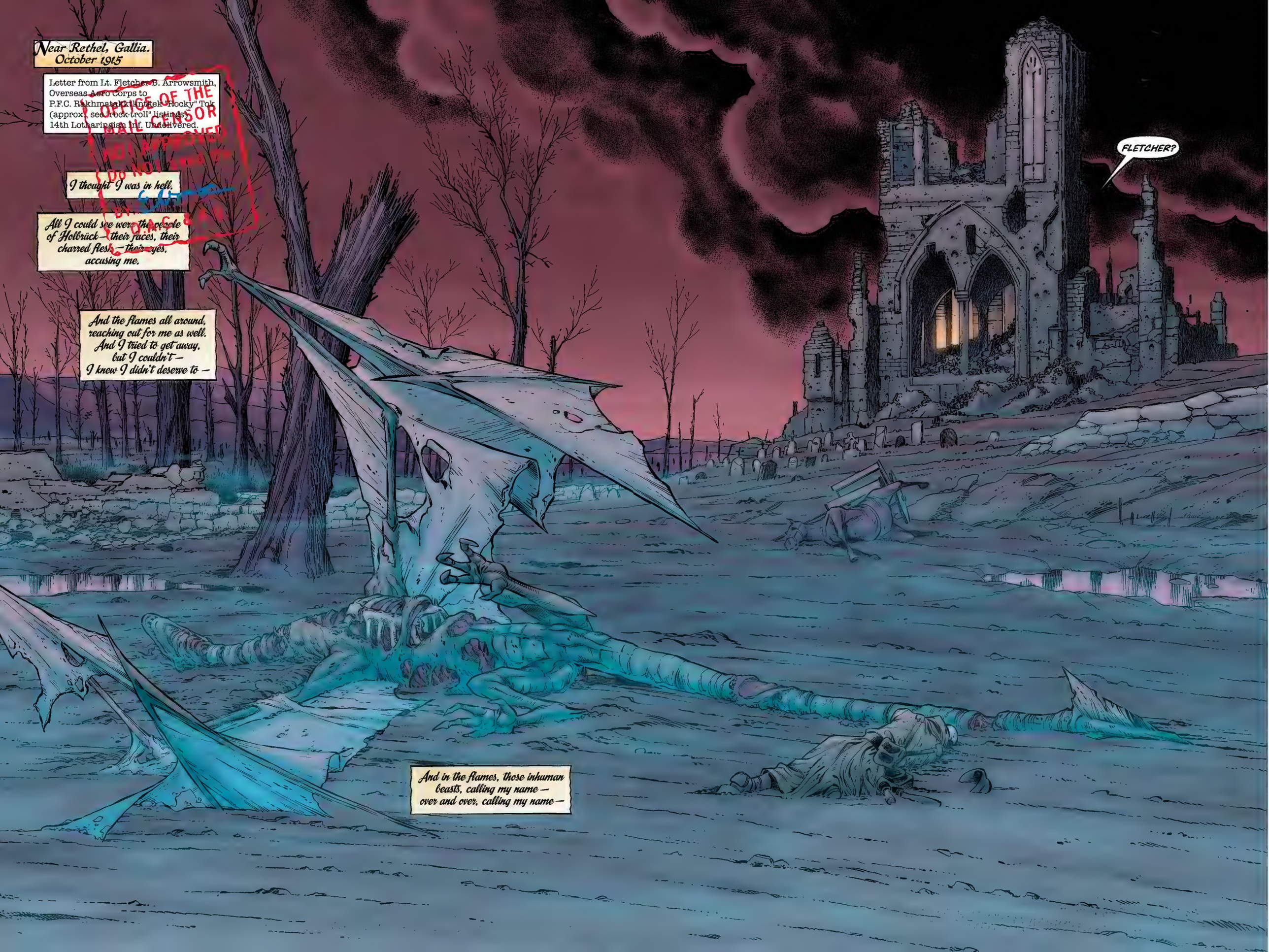
NNH!

And as I fell, and my vision went dark again, all I could feel was gratitude.
Gratitude that it was ending this swiftly —
CHH! CH!

— when for what I'd done, I deserved so much worse —

CHAPTER SIX

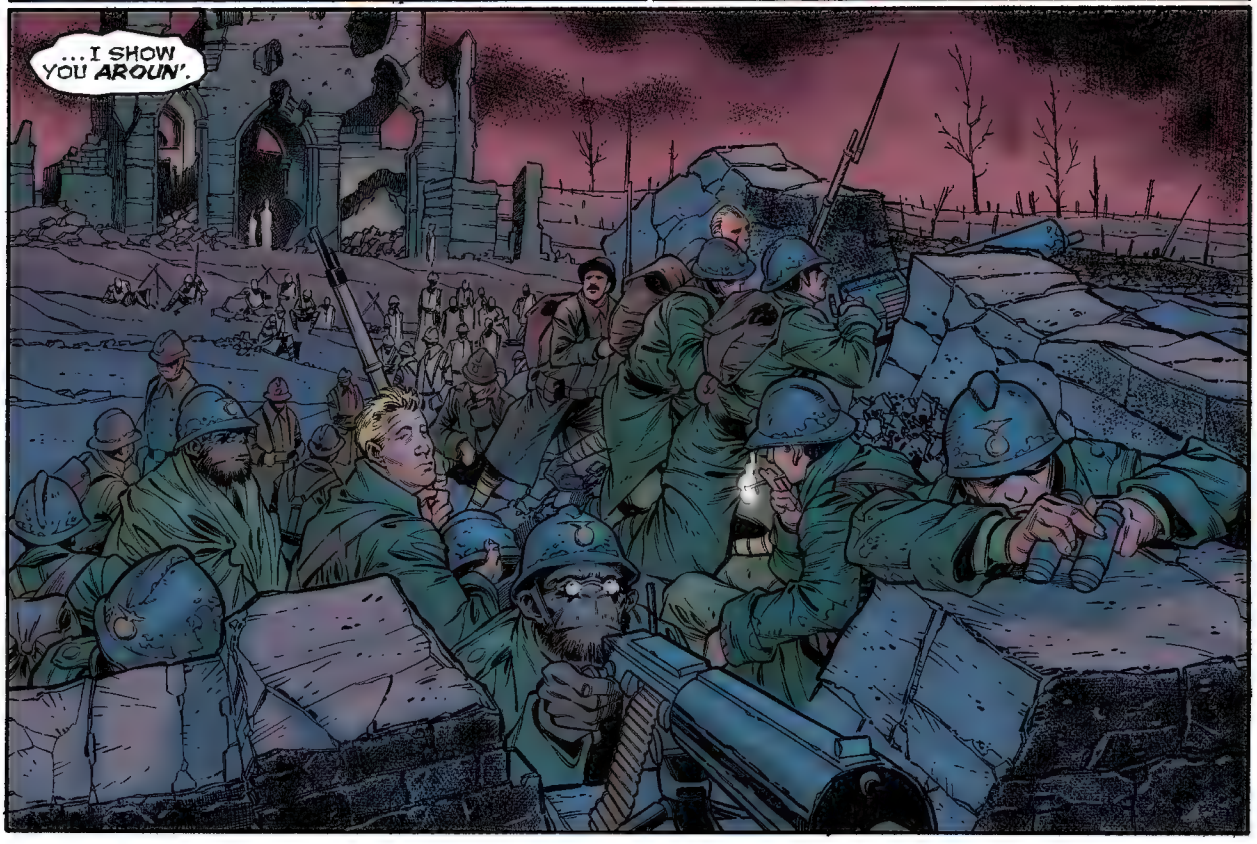
Tomorrow's Dawn

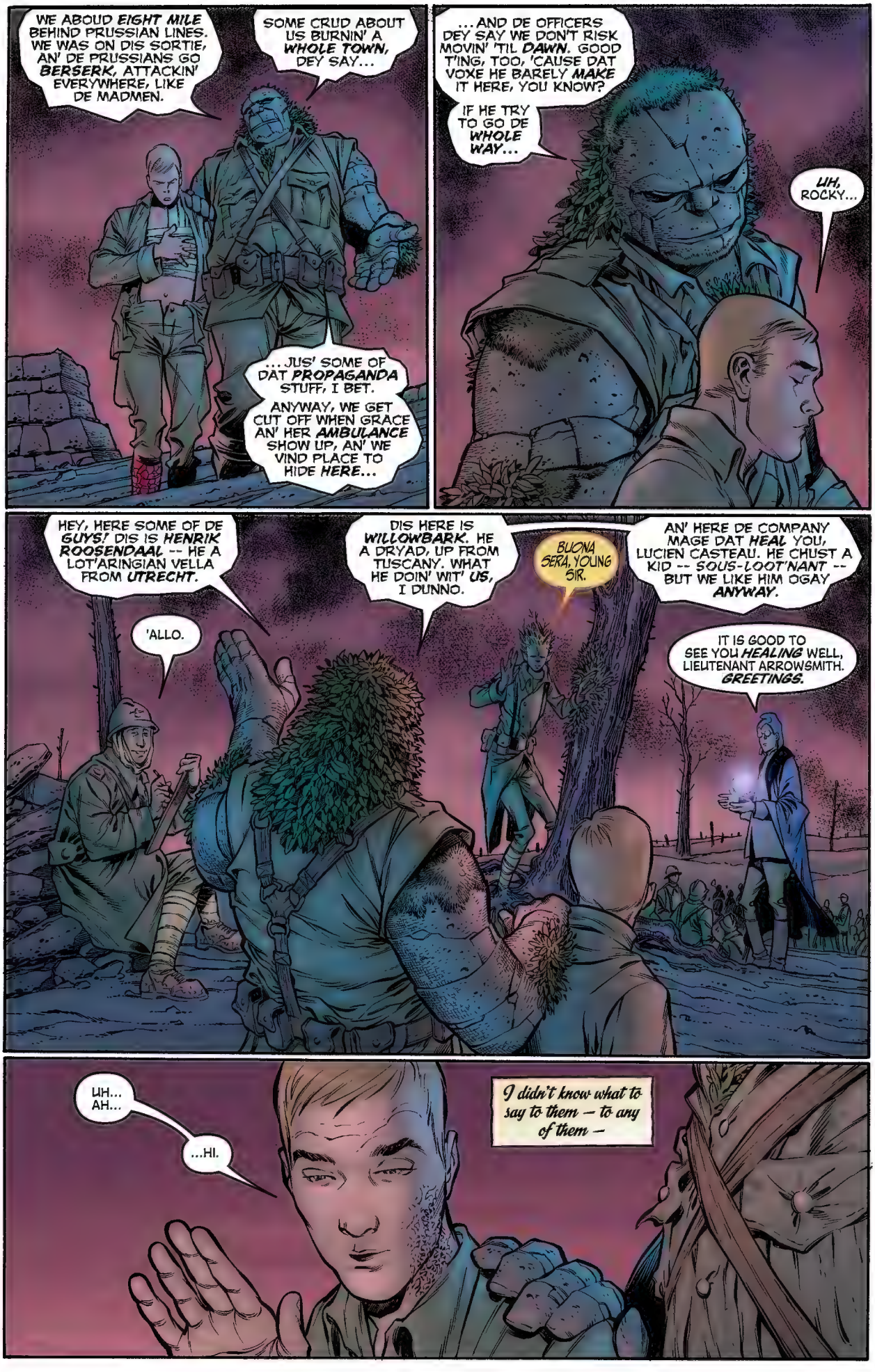

Near Rethel, Gallia.
October 1915
Letter from Lt. Fletcher B. Arrowsmith,
Overseas Aero Corps to
P.F.C. Rakhmatakktlintkek "Rocky" Tok
(approx., see "rock-troll" listings)
14th Lotharingian Inf. Undelivered.
OFFICE OF THE MAIL CENSOR
NOT APPROVED
DO NOT SEND TO
BIRTHLAND
O.A.C. & A.R.
I thought I was in hell.
All I could see were the people of Holbrück — their faces, their charred flesh — their eyes, accusing me.
And the flames all around, reaching out for me as well. And I tried to get away, but I couldn't — I knew I didn't deserve to —
And in the flames, those inhuman beasts, calling my name — over and over, calling my name —
FLETCHER?

NN... HOL' ON, KID... GOT YOU...CARRY YOU TO...
FLETCHER, CAN YOU HEAR ME? WAKE UP...
NN? WH...?
FLETCHER?
I had a panicky moment when I saw her face — yours too, Rocky. I was damned, I could accept that, I'd earned it. But the two of you?
Then the world stopped being blurry, and my chest just hurt...
GRACE? ROCKY?
WHA... WHAT'S GOING ON? HOW DID WE...?
EASY, FLETCHER. YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
HERE. TRY SOME SOUP, IT'LL WARM YOU.
YOU WERE WOUNDED. OUR MAGE HEALED THE WORST OF IT, BUT YOU'LL STILL NEED TIME FOR YOUR RIBS AND LUNGS TO FULLY KNIT.
IF CAPTAIN FOXE HADN'T GOTTEN YOU HERE, THOUGH...
F-FOXE?! HE -- I --
I looked at him —

— but in his eyes — he was seeing what I was seeing, I think.
He looked away.

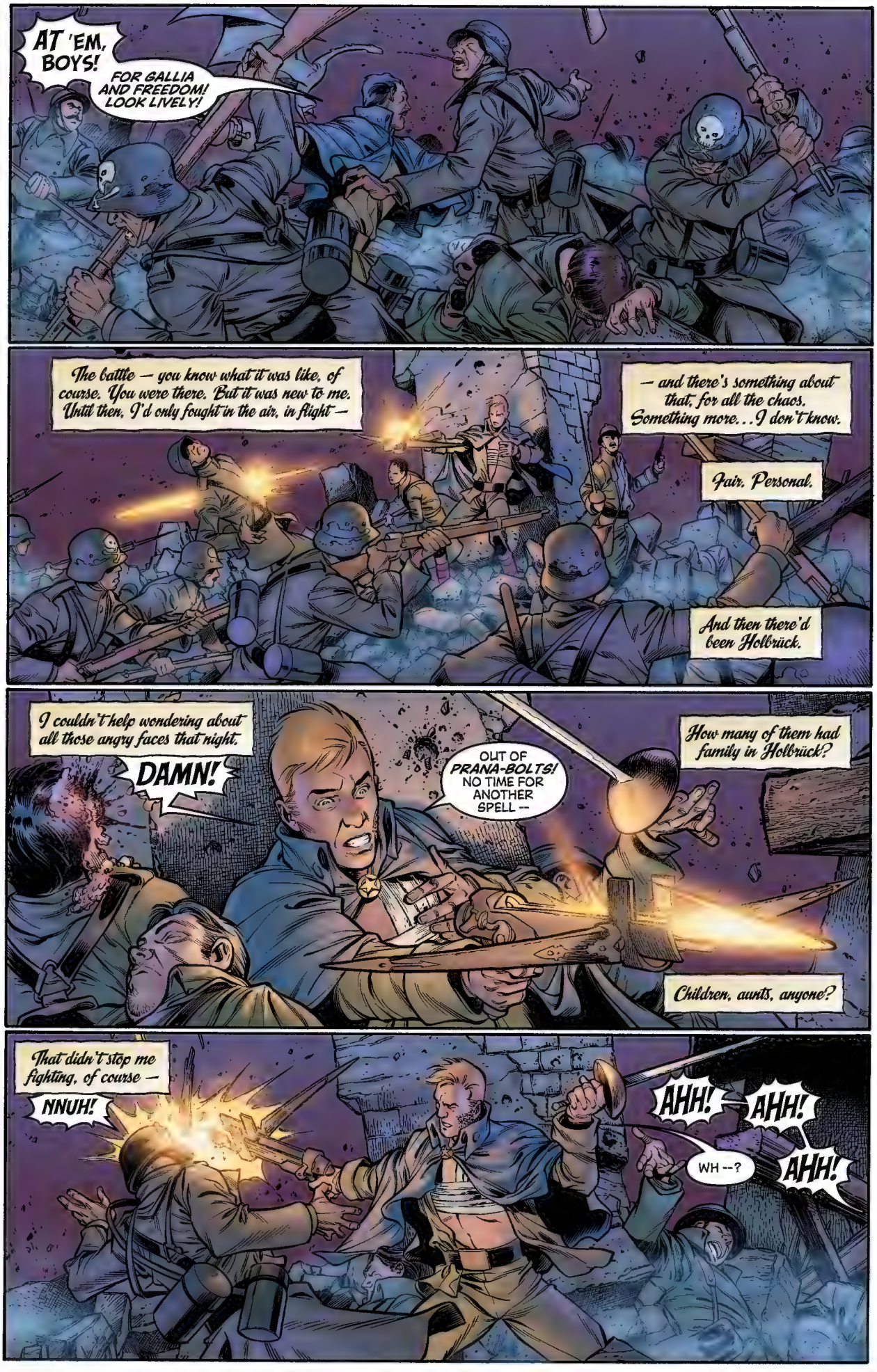
WHOA DERE, VLETCH-BOY. IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, BUT YOU GOT TO LIE DOWN, REST.
NO...I'M OKAY, I CAN STAND. I'M JUST...I'M STIFF. I NEED TO STRETCH, TO WALK...
OGAY, DEN...


...I SHOW YOU AROUN'.


WE ABOUD EIGHT MILE BEHIND PRUSSIAN LINES. WE WAS ON DIS SORTIE, AN' DE PRUSSIANS GO BERSERK, ATTACKIN' EVERYWHERE, LIKE DE MADMEN.
SOME CRUD ABOUT US BURNIN' A WHOLE TOWN, DEY SAY...
... JUS' SOME OF DAT PROPAGANDA STUFF, I BET.
ANYWAY, WE GET CUT OFF WHEN GRACE AN' HER AMBULANCE SHOW UP, AN' WE VIND PLACE TO HIDE HERE...
... AND DE OFFICERS DEY SAY WE DON'T RISK MOVIN' 'TIL DAWN. GOOD T'ING, TOO, 'CAUSE DAT VOXE HE BARELY MAKE IT HERE, YOU KNOW?
IF HE TRY TO GO DE WHOLE WAY...
UH, ROCKY...
HEY, HERE SOME OF DE GUYS! DIS IS HENRIK ROOSENDAAL -- HE A LOT'ARINGIAN VELLA FROM UTRECHT.
'ALLO.
DIS HERE IS WILLOWBARK. HE A DRYAD, UP FROM TUSCANY. WHAT HE DOIN' WIT' US, I DUNNO.
BUONA SERA, YOUNG SIR.
AN' HERE DE COMPANY MAGE DAT HEAL YOU, LUCIEN CASTEAU. HE CHUST A KID -- SOUS-LOOT'NANT -- BUT WE LIKE HIM OGAY ANYWAY.
IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU HEALING WELL, LIEUTENANT ARROWSMITH. GREETINGS.
UH... AH...
...HI.
I didn't know what to say to them — to any of them —

-- LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THE WAR BEIN' OVER, YAH. BACK TO ME OLD LIFE. THEY PUT OUT THE MILK, YOU FIX THE SHOES, YOU GET THE MILK.
A FAIR TRADE IT IS, AN' HONEST WORK. THERE YOU GO, DARLIN'...
AND...IT'S SOMETHING YOU ENJOY, RAKO?
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING ELSE?
WELL, IT'S THE WAY IT WORKS, INNIT? 'SWHAT MY PA DID, AN' HIS PA BEFORE.
MIND YOU, I GOT MY EYE ON NEW TERRITORY WHEN I GET BACK. THEY'RE BUILDIN'. MORE HOUSES MEANS MORE SHOES. MORE SHOES, MORE MILK.
JUST THE THING TO START A FAMILY ON, YAH?
AN' THERE'S THIS REDCAP LASSIE I KNOW, THE SWEETEST YOU'LL --
AHH --
AHH --
DOWN!
GET DOWN --

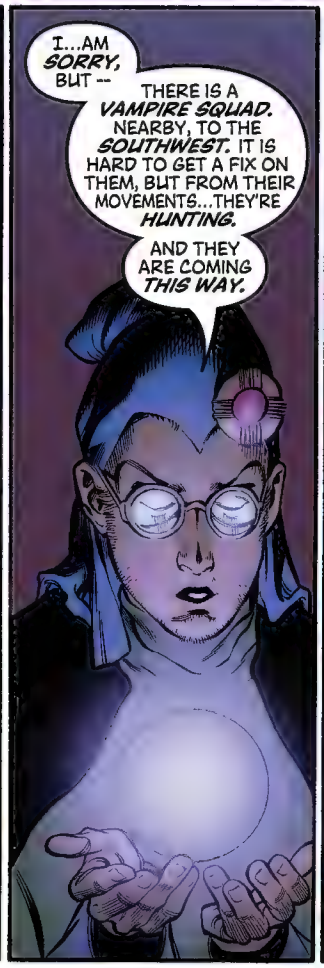
"--WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!"


AT 'EM, BOYS!
FOR GALLIA AND FREEDOM! LOOK LIVELY!
The battle — you know what it was like, of course. You were there. But it was new to me. Until then, I'd only fought in the air, in flight —
— and there's something about that, for all the chaos. Something more... I don't know.
Fair. Personal.
And then there'd been Holbrück.
I couldn't help wondering about all those angry faces that night.
DAMN!
OUT OF PRANA-BOLTS! NO TIME FOR ANOTHER SPELL --
How many of them had family in Holbrück?
Children, aunts, anyone?
That didn't stop me fighting, of course —
NNUH!
AHH!
AHH!
AHH!
WH --?

BLAM BLAM BLAM
AHH!
AHH!
CHH!!!!
We just — that's what we do, isn't it? They attack. We fight back. They fight back.
And then it's all about fighting back and it doesn't really matter how it started any more, is it? And it spreads and spreads...
GRACE!
GRACE, GET DOWN! YOU'RE --
GRACE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! THAT WEREWOLF -- HE COULD HAVE KILLED YOU!
GRACE, YOU'RE IN THE AMBULANCE CORPS! YOU'RE A NON-COMBATANT! YOU'RE NOT TRAINED, YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO --
THEY KILLED -- THEY JUST -- HIS FACE, HIS HEAD --
GET SOME COVER! AND STAY THERE, UNTIL THIS IS --
HE ONLY -- HE ONLY WANTED MORE SHOES TO FIX -- !
-- OH.
I GUESS... IT'S OVER.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, GRACE?
I CAN -- I CAN DO THIS.
IT'S ALL RIGHT -- I'LL JUST --
I'LL BE --

UH- OH.
HM?
WH -- ?

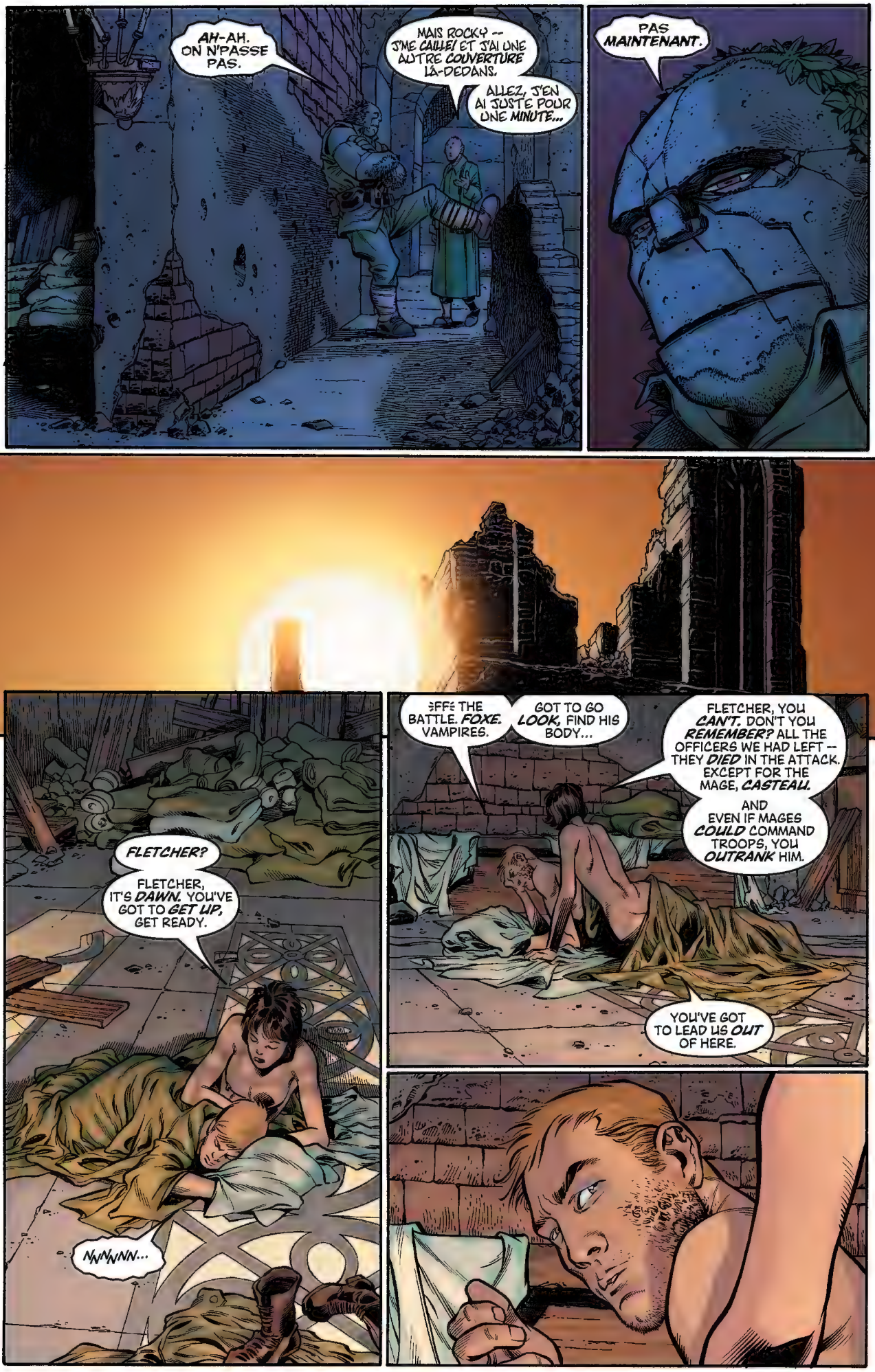

I...AM SORRY, BUT --
THERE IS A VAMPIRE SQUAD. NEARBY, TO THE SOUTHWEST. IT IS HARD TO GET A FIX ON THEM, BUT FROM THEIR MOVEMENTS...THEY'RE HUNTING.
AND THEY ARE COMING THIS WAY.

YOU HAVE ALL FOUGHT *BRAVELY* AND WELL. BUT WE CANNOT WITHSTAND ANOTHER *ATTACK* TONIGHT. NOT BY *VAMPIRES.*
THEY NEED TO BE DECOYED -- LED *AWAY* FROM OUR POSITION, AND SWIFTLY.
I'LL GO *NOW.*
HUH?
CAPTAIN FOXE -- *NO!* YOU *CAN'T!* YOU'D NEVER --
I'LL GO. I'M PRETTY *FAST,* AND I CAN --
NO, FLETCHER.
YOU'RE VERY *GOOD.* BUT YOU WOULDN'T LAST *TEN SECONDS.* I'VE GOT A FEW TRICKS THEY HAVEN'T *SEEN,* TRUST ME.
BESIDES, I'M *RANKING OFFICER* HERE. IT'S MY DECISION.
BUT SIR -- YOU *SAVED* ME! PULLED ME OUT OF --
AH-AH! DON'T NAME THAT *TOWN,* LAD. BAD LUCK TO *DWELL* ON IT.
IF I'M NOT BACK BY MORNING, MOVE OUT AT *FIRST LIGHT.* THE PRUSSIANS ALREADY *KNOW* WE'RE HERE, SO IT'S NOT SAFE.
STAY OUT OF *SIGHT,* MAKE IT BACK HOME.
NO *HEROICS* -- YOUR JOB IS TO GET *HOME,* GOT IT?
YESSIR.
YES.

THE SQUAD...IT'S STILL *MOVING.* STILL COMING CLOSER. *CLOSER...*
NO, WAIT. THEY ARE *WHEELING,* CHANGING DIRECTION...
KRAAAA!!!
THEIR *PREY-SCREAM.* THEY MUST HAVE *SIGHTED* HIM.
HE'S LEADING THEM ON A CHASE. INTO THE *WOODS.* BUT IT'S A FULL SQUAD -- *THIRTY* OF THEM --
THEY ARE *SPREADING OUT,* FLANKING -- *VERDUIVELD!*
WHAT?
MILITARY VAMPIRES ARE MYSTICALLY *"TAGGED."* I NOW HAVE A READING. THEY'RE *OURS. BULGARIANS,* OUT OF CHÂLONS-SUR-MAME.
THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE *ABLE* TO ATTACK ALLIES. BUT SOMETIMES THEY GET LOOSE, SLIP THEIR *HANDLING SPELLS...*
WAIT. WHAT IS...?
DAMN.
KRAAA!!!!!!!!!!

FLETCHER.
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WENT.
I'M SORRY, GRACE. I JUST... I WANT TO BE ALONE RIGHT NOW.
I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL. THIS WAR -- RAKO -- IT'S SO -- SO --
YOU'RE SICK ABOUT FOXE, WE ALL ARE. BUT HE DID WHAT HE DID FOR US. HE WAS A GOOD MAN. A GOOD MAN, JUST LIKE YOU ARE --
NO.
NO, WE'RE NOT.
THAT TOWN? THE TOWN THE PRUSSIANS SAY WE BURNED? WHY THEY'RE SO CRAZED?
WE DID IT, GRACE. WE DID IT.
IT WAS A WEAPONS CENTER WE WERE SENT AFTER, UNDER A CHURCH -- BUT WE DROPPED SALAMANDERS ON THEM, AND THEY JUST -- JUST BURNED --
OH, FLETCHER --
AND WHEN ONE OF THE JARS BURST -- THE SALAMANDERS GOT GOODHEART AND LOGAN --
WE JUST DROPPED THEM. ALL OVER TOWN. WOMEN, CHILDREN, HOMES -- WE BURNED THEM, GRACE. BURNED THEM ALL. WE JUST --
SHH, SHHH. YOU DIDN'T MEAN TO -- YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO --
ROCKY'S GODS -- THE GODS OF THE NORTH -- THEY'VE TURNED AWAY, TURNED THEIR BACK ON US, IT'S OUR FAULT --
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S NOT YOU. IT'S JUST THE WAR. JUST THIS DAMNED, STINKING, VILE WAR --
I DIDN'T -- THIS WASN'T WHAT I --
I KNOW, I KNOW.
IT'S NOT YOU, NOT ME, NOT ANY OF US. IT'S THIS WAR. THAT'S ALL. IT DEVOURS US -- CHANGES US.

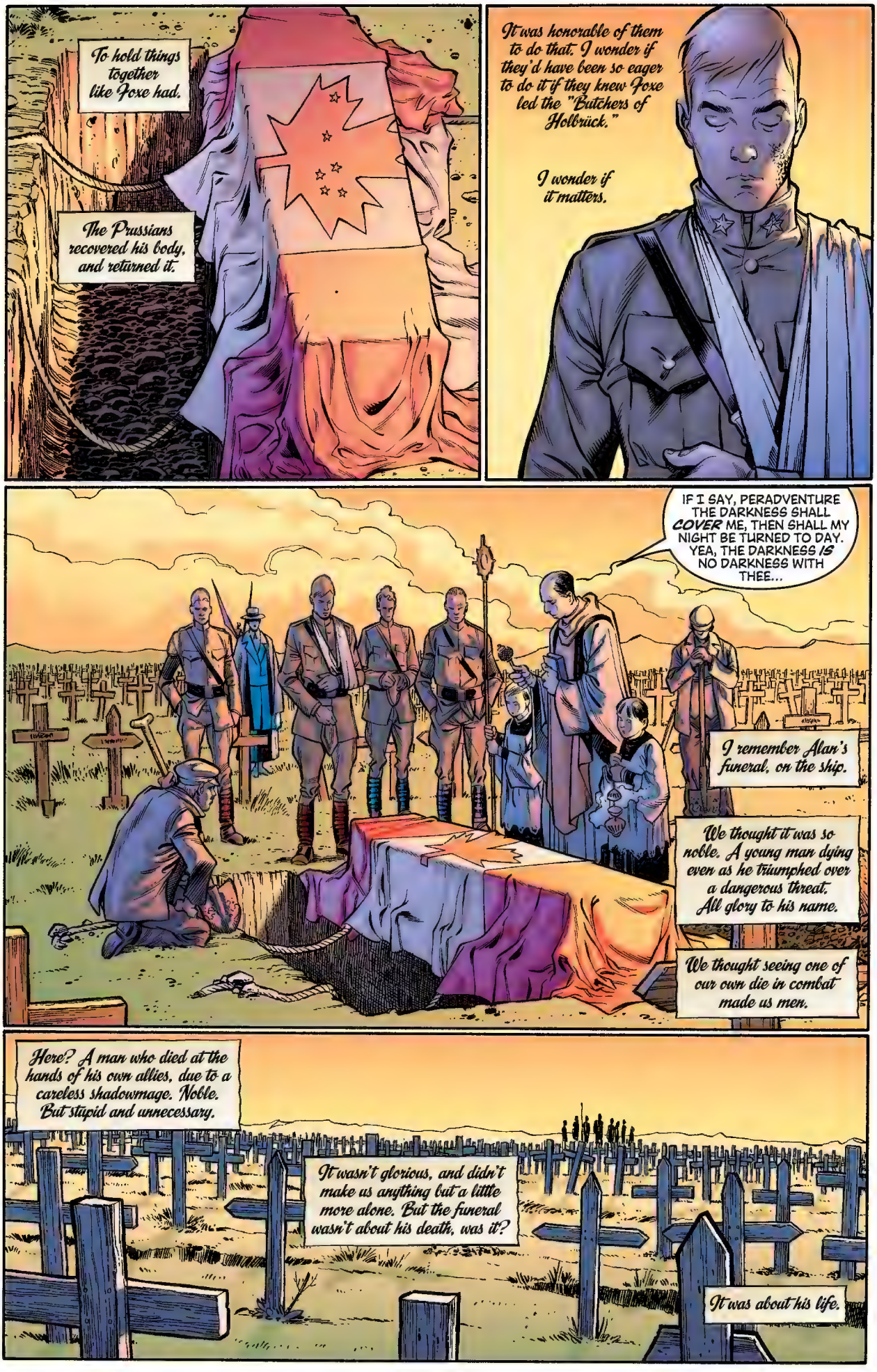
=NNNNNH!=
GRACE, I --
I NEED --
I KNOW.
OH GOD, I KNOW --
I felt so lost, so overwhelmed —
I needed to touch, to feel —
To remind myself what life meant — that it was real, that it mattered —
That we were both alive. Lost, drowning — but not alone —

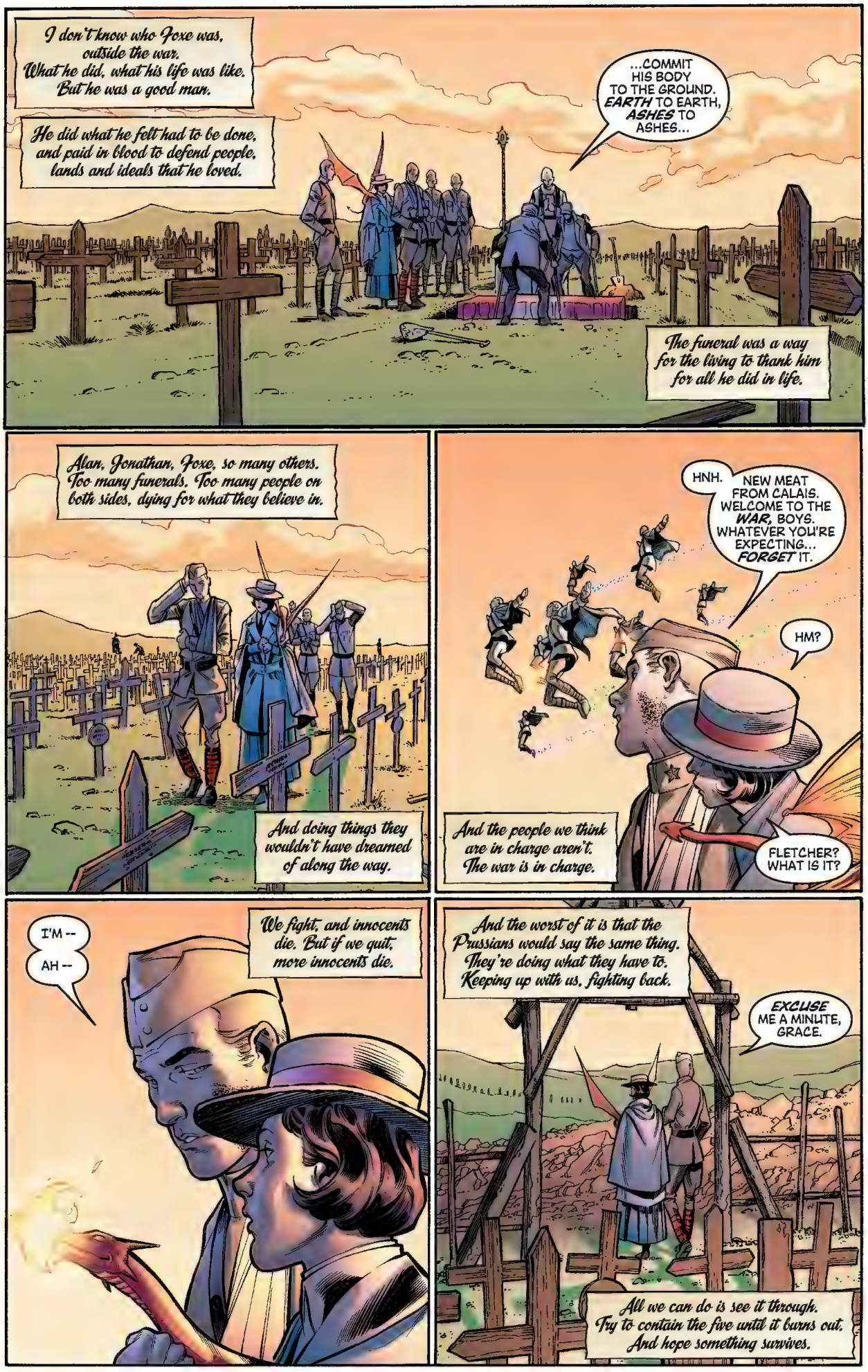

AH-AH. ON N'PASSE PAS.
MAIS ROCKY -- J'ME CAILLE! ET J'AI UNE AUTRE COUVERTURE LÀ-DEDANS.
ALLEZ, J'EN AI JUSTE POUR UNE MINUTE...
PAS MAINTENANT.
FFF THE BATTLE. FOXE. VAMPIRES.
GOT TO GO LOOK, FIND HIS BODY...
FLETCHER, YOU CAN'T. DON'T YOU REMEMBER? ALL THE OFFICERS WE HAD LEFT -- THEY DIED IN THE ATTACK. EXCEPT FOR THE MAGE, CASTEAU.
AND EVEN IF MAGES COULD COMMAND TROOPS, YOU OUTRANK HIM.
YOU'VE GOT TO LEAD US OUT OF HERE.
FLETCHER?
FLETCHER, IT'S DAWN. YOU'VE GOT TO GET UP, GET READY.
NNNNNN...

...CARRY THE PROVISIONS. WE'LL LEAVE THE BODIES, BUT CASTEAU'S LEFT A THAUMATIC BEACON SO WE CAN RECOVER THEM LATER.
I didn't want to do it.
Didn't want to have anyone depending on me. Didn't think I could manage it.
But I had no choice.
THIS WAY!
THERE'S COVER ABOUT SEVENTY YARDS AHEAD! STAY LOW -- BUT QUICK! QUICK!
I was all they had. And someone had to do it.
DE LA BRUME!
QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST? DE LA BRUME DÉVORANTE?
CETTE SALOPERIE DE BRUME PRUSIENNE QUI CHANGE LES HOMMES ES EN MONSTRES?
Duty's a wonderful thing, sometimes. Whatever's eating at you, if there's someone counting on you, you have to put it aside.
I didn't think much about Holbrück that morning. Or Foxe, or the other men who'd died the night before, or even Grace.
MAIS NON, C'EST JUSTE UNE, EUH -- IT'S JUST AN ORDINARY MIST, I THINK.
WITH LUCK, IT'LL GIVE US COVER -- LET US MAKE IT HOME WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED!
WE MUST BE ALMOST TO THE LINES.
MAYBE I CAN CARRY US OVER THE PRUSSIANS, ONE BY ONE, IF THE MIST HOLDS...
Don't screw up. That's what I thought.

DES SOLDATS! LE PRUSSIENS!
OH, NO! SPREAD OUT, EVERYONE! NO GROUPS, NO LARGE TARGETS!
LAY DOWN FIRE, THEN RETREAT TO --
I SAY...
...IS THAT A YANK VOICE I HEAR?
AND AN AIRMAN, NO LESS -- LEADING INFANTRY? THE LOTHARINGIAN 14TH, IS IT?
CAPTAIN DONALD THOMASON, THIRD ALBIONESE FUSILIERS, AT YOUR SERVICE. WE WERE TOLD YOU MIGHT BE IN THIS SECTOR.
And I didn't.
We must have made it through the lines in the fog. Missed the Prussians by the sheerest chance.
OH, FLETCHER, WE MADE IT!
YOU DID IT!
NOD TOO BAD, VLETCH-BOY. NOD TOO BAD...

I wish I could say that made it all better. That I learned a lesson about the loneliness of command, and I understood it all now.
But I didn't and I don't. I spent a week in the hospital, and when they let me go, I reported to the Académie Militaire for debriefing.
...AND YOU SAY THE PREMATURELY-RELEASED SALAMANDERS LEAPT FROM AIRMAN TO AIRMAN?
HM.
YES, SIR. AND THEY GREW -- FAST AND UNCONTROLLABLY. I CAN'T IMAGINE, EVEN IF THE MISSION HAD GONE CORRECTLY, THAT THE TOWN WOULD HAVE LIVED THROUGH --
PERHAPS A DURABILITY SPELL? THE BOTTLES DON'T BREAK 'TIL RELEASED?
YES, YES.
AND AN ANTIPATHY SPELL ON THE AIRMEN, TO STOP THE CREATURES FROM --
SIRS, PLEASE. I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND. EVEN IF THEY'D WORKED PERFECTLY, WHAT WE DID IN THAT TOWN WAS --
EXCUSE ME. URGENT REPORT, SIRS. AN INTACT CANISTER OF PRUSSIAN R-MIST HAS BEEN CAPTURED IN SECTOR 48.
IT'S BEING BROUGHT IN NOW.
EH?
QUOI?!
THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT ARROWSMITH. YOUR TESTIMONY HAS BEEN VALUABLE, AND YOUR CONCERNS NOTED. DISMISSED.
They didn't care. No, that's not right. They cared, but it didn't matter.
I'd thought these men — and the generals and kings and so on — were masters of the world. And maybe they were, once.
CALL IN THAUMATIC ANALYSTS
IF WE CAN CRACK THE PHILTRE BASE
A WARDING SPELL
But now, they're just trying to hang on. To keep fighting back. To hold the line, whatever it costs. To hold things together.


To hold things together like Foxe had.
The Prussians recovered his body, and returned it.
It was honorable of them to do that. I wonder if they'd have been so eager to do it if they knew Foxe led the "Butchers of Holbrück."
I wonder if it matters.
IF I SAY, PERADVENTURE THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER ME, THEN SHALL MY NIGHT BE TURNED TO DAY. YEA, THE DARKNESS IS NO DARKNESS WITH THEE...
I remember Alan's funeral, on the ship.
We thought it was so noble. A young man dying even as he triumphed over a dangerous threat. All glory to his name.
We thought seeing one of our own die in combat made us men.
Here? A man who died at the hands of his own allies, due to a careless shadowmage. Noble. But stupid and unnecessary.
It wasn't glorious, and didn't make us anything but a little more alone. But the funeral wasn't about his death, was it?
It was about his life.


I don't know who Foxe was, outside the war. What he did, what his life was like. But he was a good man.
He did what he felt had to be done, and paid in blood to defend people, lands and ideals that he loved.
...COMMIT HIS BODY TO THE GROUND. EARTH TO EARTH, ASHES TO ASHES...
The funeral was a way for the living to thank him for all he did in life.
Alan, Jonathan, Foxe, so many others. Too many funerals. Too many people on both sides, dying for what they believe in.
And doing things they wouldn't have dreamed of along the way.
HNH.
NEW MEAT FROM CALAIS. WELCOME TO THE WAR, BOYS. WHATEVER YOU'RE EXPECTING... FORGET IT.
HM?
FLETCHER? WHAT IS IT?
And the people we think are in charge aren't. The war is in charge.
I'M --
AH --
We fight, and innocents die. But if we quit, more innocents die.
And the worst of it is that the Prussians would say the same thing. They're doing what they have to. Keeping up with us, fighting back.
EXCUSE ME A MINUTE, GRACE.
All we can do is see it through. Try to contain the five until it burns out. And hope something survives.

I think your northern gods are gone, Rocky. And maybe not just them. The whole world is changing.
Old ways are ending. New ways are being born.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME. BUT THANK YOU.
AND I'M SORRY.
And whether that's good or bad, whether we're building a better future, or hell on Earth — we just don't know.
And we won't, until it's all over, and it's too late to fix anything.
I'VE GOT TO GO, FLETCHER.
I'M BEING SENT SOUTH, NEAR A PLACE CALLED VERDUN. NEW RECRUITS THERE, TOO, AND I'VE GOT TO TRAIN SOME OF THEM.
WRITE ME, OR ELSE.
And whatever's coming, it'll be up to men — not gods, maybe not even wizards and lords — to make something of the mess that's left.
GRACE!
HM?
I WILL. I'LL WRITE. TAKE CARE, ALL RIGHT?
If they can, at least.
I don't know what it'll be like, or when it'll happen —

— but I hope we all get a chance to find out.
And I hope that chance comes soon.
Your friend,
Fletcher

AFTERWORD

I hope you've enjoyed what you've just read. Or, if you're one of those people who reads the back-matter before the main act, let me gently suggest you read the story first and then come back here. What follows will make more sense that way.

And in any case, thanks for reading.

There are three main origins for *Arrowsmith: So Smart in Their Fine Uniforms*. The first, of course, is Carlos Pacheco, series artist and co-creator. We first worked together after Carlos was negotiating a new exclusive deal with Marvel Comics. He'd been drawing *X-Men*, but one of his contract requests was that he wanted to draw an Avengers project, and he wanted me to write it.

I was immensely flattered that such a terrific artist wanted to work with me, and after we'd been working together for a bit, even more flattered that when I suggested creating something together, he enthusiastically agreed. It's always a treat when amazing artists actually *want* to work with you.

Anyway, the project we'd been working on was *Avengers Forever*, and while I loved everything Carlos brought to it — relentless energy, enthusiasm and brilliant storytelling —

one piece of it I was utterly amazed by was his sense of visual worldbuilding. He'd told me he didn't want to redesign Kang, the time-traveling conqueror who was a major character, so much as make Kang's world look like the kind of world where a guy wearing a diving helmet, a blue face mask and pin-striped magenta hip boots was what a badass looked like. And he did — he gave Kang weapons full of inlays and filigree and a world that felt like an SF version of Louis XIV's France full of decoration and elegance, and the setting elevated Kang.

I definitely wanted any project we created to play to Carlos's design skills.

The second major point of inspiration was a *Final Fantasy* mini-series I wrote for Disney Comics, based on the video game, that was never published. You're not missing much; the mini-series wasn't that great. But there was an engineer named (I think) Cid, who was building these huge war machines in a world full of fantasy creatures and swords, and I loved that juxtaposition. So I'd been thinking of what else I might do with a series involving magical creatures and industrial technology.

And the third point was an idea I'd suggested to my friend Lawrence Watt-Evans, a fantasy author whose publishers had asked him for what was then known in the industry as a "big fat fantasy novel." I suggested that he do a fantasy-world version of World War I, where inexperienced young men were taught to fly and thrown into battle as quickly as possible, because the war needed bodies and didn't have time to make sure they were experienced. Maybe they were taught a few easy spells and sent to war. Lawrence reworked the concept completely, and wrote the very fine novel *Touched By the Gods*. But the idea stuck with me, in the context that I'd first imagined it, and I figured since what Lawrence had done was so different, I was free to use it anew...

So mix all that up with a healthy dose of J.C. Leyendecker, movies like *Dawn Patrol* and an essay I wrote on the origins of World War I for, all of places, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, and we were off to the races. Carlos liked the ideas I threw at him, I liked the ideas he came back at me with, and it all coalesced into a series.

And now we're doing more, and we hope you'll like that, too. And that you'll like the extras we've prepared for you, starting on the next page...

— Kurt Busiek
November 2021

APPENDIX ONE
Dossier
TOP SECRET

It took a few years for our plan to co-create a project to reach fruition. *Arrowsmith* was originally conceived as a potential Gorilla Comics book in 2000, but when that venture didn't last, we came back to it when Carlos was asked to do a Cliffhanger book at DC-Wildstorm in 2003. What follows is the proposal we sent Scott Dunbier at Wildstorm, plus some of Carlos's design sketches...

—kdb

ARROWSMITH

QUICK-AND-DIRTY PRECIS FOR A NEW ONGOING SERIES CREATED BY BUSIEK & PACHECO

UP FRONT...

Arrowsmith is a series of fantasy and war, of magic and technology, and of action, intrigue and adventure set against a visually compelling background in which magical power and magical creatures are an integral part of World War I.

It is both a coming-of-age story and an end-of-innocence story, as a young man sheds his romantic illusions in the face of the horror of war, and a world experiences a shift in power. As an age of nobility ends and a modern, industrialized age begins – but no one sees it coming, and the ramifications of the change are disastrous.

It's a dangerous world of unstable alliances, of ancient, unleashed evil and of an arms race unchecked by conscience or morality. To survive will take a stout heart and consummate skill – but even those may not be enough to save the world.

And even if the "good guys" win, the world will be forever changed. But will it be for better ... or worse?

Design sketch for Hilda, Fletcher's dragonet

THE WORLD

The world of *Arrowsmith* is a lot like our own, but for one major change. In this world, all the stuff of folklore and fairy tales are true — wizards, magic, trolls, dwarfs, elves, dragons and more. No actual gods greater than, say, the Celtic Sons of Don — the Greek or Norse gods are just too big — but all the other stuff of folklore, from spinning wheels that spin straw into gold to werewolves to trolls that hide under bridges and eat passersby.

But all that was centuries ago, and unlike in the fairy tales, we'd take a somewhat realistic view of how a world like that might develop. Magic exists, there are multiple intelligent races – and in 800 AD, Charlemagne made a pact with the high courts of the magical realms, opening the way to trade agreements, to political alliances and to open interaction between humanity and the magical races – some of the magical races, anyway. And since then, magic and magical beings have been a part of the world and its development.

So by the time of the opening of this series, it's 1915 or so, and we're in the middle of a magic-based Industrial Revolution. Technology is full of strange, new and wild-looking stuff, from clipper ships that sail the skies, supported by giant, clunky, turbine-like "gravity pumps" that pump all the gravity out of the hulls, to mass-produced amulets, spells of protection and more. Dragons haul trains along their tracks and immigrant trolls are be digging the subways of Manhattan.

Visually, the world is a mixture of the bustling brownstones-and-streetcars urban growth of the early Twentieth Century with dragons, magical machinery and a polyglot populace of humans and fantasy creatures, all mingling in a visually-compelling melting pot, so that even everyday street scenes would be arresting and involving. History ran somewhat differently than it did for us, so while we still have a United States, it's the United States of Columbia, and it only extends as far west as the Mississippi, the rest of the continent taken up by the countries of Tejas, Deseret, California, Newfoundland, Dakota, Acadia, Grand Florida and Mexico. And while Europe is very familiar, there are more countries (Gallia, Lotharingia, Prussia and Bavaria instead of merely France and Germany, for instance), with histories and royal lineages just as long and complex. And the treaties and marital ties and so

on between and among the rulers of these countries are *even more* complex than in our own history, thanks in part to the Treaty of Charlemagne making noble blood all the more powerful and respected.

It is a time of great forward-looking energy *and* of great tradition, permeated with the ideals of the past. An era of great romantic ideals, ancient noble houses and a burgeoning new technology no one quite understands the effect of.

And it's a time of war. Because World War I happens here just as it did for us — a war that explodes out of a minor conflict, drawing most of the western world into it through old treaties and ancient alliances. But for all that it's driven by the alliances and ties of the past, it's war fought with the new technologies, so nobody understands just how big and how destructive it's going to be. In short, like World War I, it's the last romantic war and the first modern war at the same time. Only with werewolves, dragons, sorcerers and bizarre and fantastic engines of destruction making it more visually-fascinating than World War I ever was.

Above and left:
The Blood Emperor

The romantic "golden boys" of this war, like the biplane pilots of WWI, are the airmen – daring young wizards who've been trained in flying spells and little else. These wizards are able to manifest a glowing triangle around the soles of their boots that levitates them into the air and allows them to "skate" through the air, skimming and swooping through the clouds. And they don't look like what we think of when we think of wizards — no robes, no pointy hats, no beards. These are young men in leather flying jackets, helmets and goggles, with long silk scarfs fluttering around their necks, swooping and stunting unaided through the skies, firing bolts of destruction at each other and their targets on the ground. They seem impossibly heroic, dashing and romantic.

They also die like flies. At the start of the war, nobody was prepared, and these tyro fliers get maybe three weeks of sketchy magical training before they're hurled into the front lines, where they're desperately needed, but where most of them simply don't have the skills to survive. Their life expectancy is short — but oh, the thrill of flying, as long as they last — !

OUR HERO

Our lead character would be Fletcher Arrowsmith, a young American, about 16 years old. He runs away from home, his head full of romance and dreams of glory, and lies about his age in order to sign up for flight training. He gets his pathetically-inadequate training and is plunged into the horrors of war too fast and too soon, left to live or die dependent on how fast he can smarten up.

Fletcher's friend Jonathan

He's one of the ones who lives, naturally enough, and through his eyes we can see the whole sweep of the war and what it's doing to his world. He'll have the thrill of flying, but the constant nearness of death. He'll see the nobility of both sides respecting each other and acting like old-line lords while teenagers are dying face down in the churned-up mud below. He can go anywhere and do anything, going on dawn patrol missions, getting shot down and held prisoner, meeting the right princes and going on important undercover missions. He can be involved in anything from a romance with a Hemingway-esque Red Cross nurse to a desperate mission to stop an enemy sorcerer from using prisoners in a necromantic ceremony to bring back to life an elder demon and crush an allied advance to the first deployment of the sorcerous equivalent of mustard gas, or an attempt to recover the mystic power source needed to power the techno-magical equivalent of tanks. And more.

Early design sketch for Grace

Arrowsmith will be a very adventurous series, full of wild visuals and a rich, involving context, but at the same time a bittersweet series, as romantic ideals like honor and courage are assailed by the cold reality of swift, bloody death. If our lead, and the world, cling too tightly to their romantic dreams, they'll be crushed underfoot by the new world that's coming. But it they don't hang onto at least some of it, they'll have lost their humanity.

THE TITLE

Just a note, to get it in somewhere: The series and the lead are called Arrowsmith mostly because I just like the resonance of the name; the idea of a man who makes arrows is itself an expression of the series themes. Making arrows is a technology, but it's a technology of the past, of a romantic time gone by. [And even "Fletcher" is another name for a maker of arrows.] That kind of dichotomy can pop up again

and again – our flight officers, for instance, will fire mass-manufactured mystic crossbow bolts, using a "modern" technology via an ancient weapon, showing once again the old clashing with the new.

THE SERIES

Arrowsmith would be an ongoing series published in story arcs, accommodating Carlos's schedule needs rather than bringing in fill-in artists. We would plan it out in large enough story chunks to make attractive and satisfying trade paperbacks, and produce it on a schedule that can get those story arcs out on a monthly basis. Then the series would take a brief break until we're far enough ahead to ensure on-time shipping of the next arc, and so on.

Rocky!

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST ARC

The first story arc in *Arrowsmith* would focus on introducing the world and themes of the series, and the core conflict at the heart of Fletcher – he wants to be a good man, but war drives even good men to unthinkable acts.

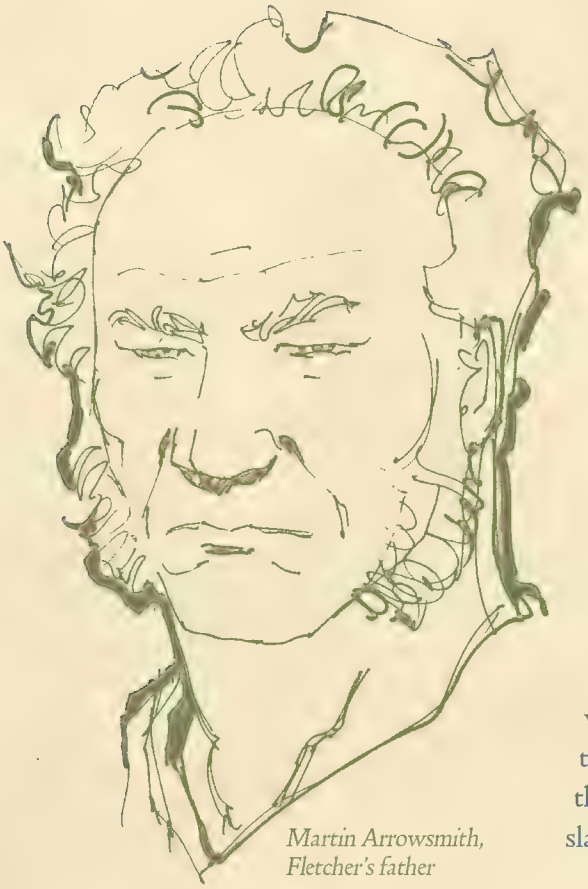
I see it playing out something like this:

1 – We introduce the world situation and the bitter, bloody fighting in what we know as France. We meet Fletcher as he gets caught up in anti-Prussian propaganda and makes the decision to run away from home and join this world's version of the Lafayette Escadrille – American volunteers fighting under French command. By issue's end, we've established both Fletcher's dreams of nobility, honor and heroism, and the idea that things aren't likely to be the way he imagines them.

But he's signed up and off to New York, and they desperately need more airmen in the war...

2 – Fletcher's entry into the military and his inadequate training. We'll meet Fletcher's fellow trainees, most of whom are starry-eyed or hopeful in ways not unlike Fletcher, but rivalries, enmities and friendships will be born. We'll also meet the military wizard corps and plant the seeds of discovery that escalating technology is running the war but nobody's running the technology – it's out of anyone's hands by now. And we'll see the New York of this world in all its charm and glory, and Fletcher will meet a girl – the daughter of a wealthy New York family determined to do her part, so she's going "over there" as a volunteer ambulance driver. She and Fletcher are drawn to each other by their similar dreams –

Prussian ogre



Martin Arrowsmith, Fletcher's father

– and over in Europe, the Kaiser, backed by the mysterious **[REDACTED]**, seems unstoppable.

3 – Fletcher's squadron is sent to France aboard ship. Very dashing, very upscale, very much a sendoff of noble young warriors. Fletcher gets to spend more time with his sweetheart. And under way, they're attacked by Prussian-sent sea-monsters and manage to defeat them, Fletcher getting valuable combat practice as he does so. They toast their victory with champagne in the moonlight, thinking this is just what it's supposed to be like.

They are, of course, horribly wrong.

They get to Europe, and are expecting official welcomes, orderly assignments and being eased into the war. But they don't get it. As soon as they arrive, they're rushed to the front, thrown into action and the slaughter begins.

4 – Fletcher survives.

His days are spent in combat or waiting for combat. He witnesses astonishing nobility and frightening brutality. He's in near-constant terror. But he survives. His sense are numbed, his dreams shattered, and he's reduced to an automaton, a fighting machine who kills not for honor, but for simple survival. He's in danger of losing his soul.

There's one fighter there who seems to have it all together, though, and that's the only thing that keeps the spark of Fletcher's dreams alive. He meets the girl again, similarly shell-shocked – and even friends from home – a troll who worked on his family's farm who was shamed into joining up to fight for him homeland by Fletcher's impassioned arguments – arguments Fletcher no longer has faith in.

But over at the Wizardry Corps they've got a new weapon to test – and even the people who created it are repulsed by it. And Fletcher's squadron is chosen to test it.

5 – The atrocity.

Fletcher is being prepared for a secret mission – the testing of the new weapon. He and his squad are shown evidence of Prussian atrocities, whipped into a frenzy of revenge by propaganda. But at the same time, his exposure to the Wizardry Corps lets him see that even these masters of the

mystic arts are dealing with very new technologies, from manufacturing to scale, and nobody knows the full repercussions of what they're doing. Some new device, a new understanding of an existing weapon or something — will make Fletcher realize that he and his fellows are being led by guesswork, by men who are out of their depth, not the wise nobles he'd thought.

And then Fletcher gets his first real taste of atrocity by helping commit one. The new weapon the wizards have come up with is a means of keeping salamanders (fire elementals) in vacuum bottles. They rig backpacks with a dozen or more of these, so a squad of airmen like Fletcher can firebomb a Prussian city. And they do — and Fletcher sees unarmed men, women and children burned alive as the attack goes out of control, with greater devastation than anyone had expected.

And during the atrocity, Fletcher sees the great spirits of the north – Cernunnos, and others who represent wildness and nature – turn their backs on humanity and leave this world in sorrow for what it has become.

The world has lost more than it may ever realize. And Fletcher has to come to terms with the fact that he helped make it happen.

6 — A shaken, shattered Fletcher is shot down in the wake of the firebombing mission, and he and the heroic airman of issue 4 have to make it back to base, though Fletcher, wounded and distraught, has lost his taste for war. He and the other airman join up with the ambulance-driver gal and the troll from back home, and it looks like they're going to make it –

— until they're ambushed by enemy forces – vampires, maybe – and the other airman nobly and willingly sacrifices himself to ensure the others' escape.

Fletcher and his girl find respite in each others' arms, but the act of love in the midst of death brings home to Fletcher

Above and right:
Early designs for Fletcher

a simple truth: Life goes on. He has to grow up — to realize that war isn't a matter of good guys in white and bad guys in black but of violence and anger and hateful acts from both sides. And war is bigger than any one person, too. If he quits and runs, nothing will stop — and the side he's on, for all that he's horrified by it, is the side fighting for freedom. So he's got to, literally, soldier on.

But the arc ends at the funeral of the airman who saved him, and Fletcher comes to see the ceremony for more than he did before; he sees it as an affirmation of life, of the necessity to pay in blood for what you believe in, and a thanks to those who've made that payment. It gives him a new perspective – a hope that there's something beyond the madness, a hope that lets him fight for a more mature, more seasoned ideal — and gives him a glimpse of the world to come, a world where something can be built out of the ashes of the old world destroying itself. He's growing up — as is the world around him.

That's a rough outline – I'm sure we'd find other ways of playing it out as we go. And a couple of those issues seem pretty tight so it might go seven issues rather than six. But that should give you an idea of what kind of opening arc we'd have.

BEYOND THAT -

• I think the next arc would be about Fletcher and a **[REDACTED]** (whom Fletcher is ready to think of as a useless fop) going on an undercover mission as prisoners of war in Prussia to find and stop a necromancer using POWs in unholy rites. This would get Fletcher closer to the kind of people who've been running the world and let him see through their eyes, at least for a bit – plus, it'd get him behind enemy lines, and able to see and interact with our main series villains.

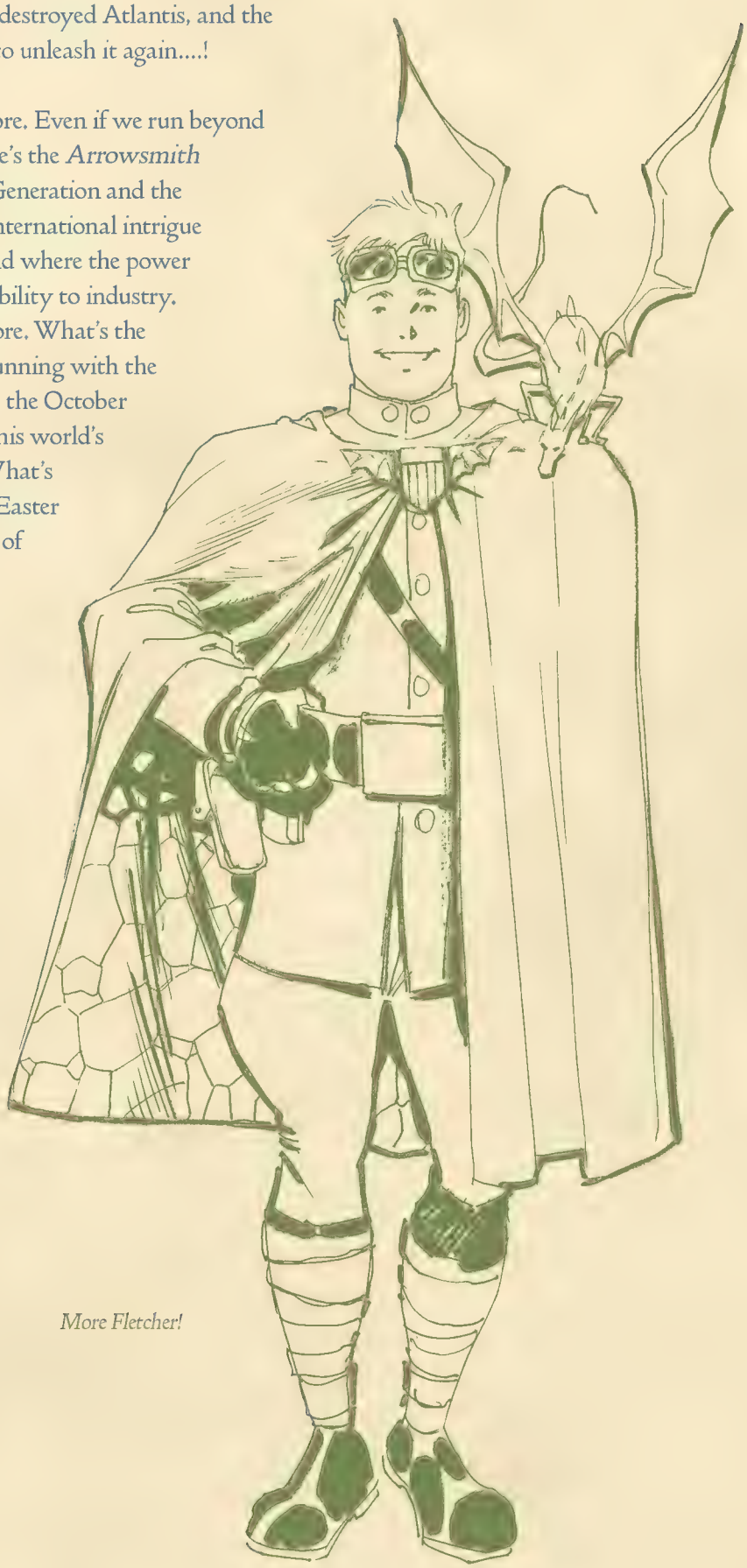
• I want to send Fletcher off to Arabia, in search of a genie who not only represents power, but who knows secrets about **[REDACTED]**, the power behind the Kaiser.

• I want to send Fletcher in search of Atlantis, in hopes of recovering the power that permeates

all magic and drives all of the war's weaponry. But it's also the power that destroyed Atlantis, and the arms race is proposing to unleash it again....!

And I'm sure there's more. Even if we run beyond the end of the war, there's the *Arrowsmith* equivalent of the Lost Generation and the Barnstorming Age or international intrigue and adventure in a world where the power base is shifting from nobility to industry. There's a world to explore. What's the magical equivalent of running with the bulls in Pamplona? Did the October Revolution happen in this world's equivalent of Russia? What's going on in Japan? On Easter Island? In the corridors of power of the magical beings?

There's adventure enough to fuel *Arrowsmith* for a long time to come.



More Fletcher!

APPENDIX TWO

A History of the Modern World

When we started out on *Arrowsmith*, I knew I didn't have the necessary knowledge or training to create an entire alternate-world history. But I knew someone who did: Hugo-winning fantasy & SF author Lawrence Watt-Evans, who I mentioned earlier. After Lawrence agreed to do it, I talked over what we wanted Fletcher's world to look like. Lawrence set out to build a history that would result in that world and did a magnificent job.

As you can now see for yourself, though I'll note that we haven't followed this history exactly as we've worked on the second arc. Plus, this is actually only the first part of what Lawrence created for us, but we have to save something for the *next* hardcover...

—kdb

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT FROM ATLANTIS TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS

A PREFATORY NOTE

This is a brief history concentrating on the major political and historical developments that created the world Fletcher Arrowsmith will be adventuring in. The main intent is to keep the world exotic, adventurous, romantic in the classic sense and full of the kind of European alliances and dynasties that created World War I in the real world, but with enough altered names and borders to seem fantastic and different. To combine the appeal of fantasy and magic with the period appeal of *Titanic*-era culture, merged into a world where nothing is quite the same as the world we know. It's an old world — but new, too, at the same time.

There isn't much here on how magic works. But as a note on creatures: Three words we want to avoid in *Arrowsmith* are "elf," "dwarf" and "fairy," since they're so Disneyfied in much of the minds of the audience. As such, we've given different names to those creatures and to Faerie itself. What we think of as elves and faeries call themselves the Lightborn, and come from a mystic realm called the Summer-Land or Summer Country, a legendary land in Welsh mythology. Their government is a complex parliamentary monarchy called the Seelie Court (drawn from Celtic myth), and they have alliances with the Earthborn, who we generally think of as dwarves. Trolls, goblins, kobolds, sprites and more all exist, as a part of all this, but use their traditional names. There are also classes called the Waterborn (selkies, kelpies, the mer-people) and the Flameborn; the only examples we know so far are salamanders (fire elementals) and dragons. The evil faerie creatures are the Darkborn, a class that includes vampires, werewolves and such. They're far more chaotic than the Lightborn, but have a rudimentary authority in the form of an Unseelie Court.

Onward...

ATLANTIS

Atlantis was a large island — not a continent, as some would have it, but a land somewhat larger than Asia Minor — beyond Gibraltar, in the Atlantic, not far beyond the horizon. At its peak, in the 17th century BC, its highest towers could sometimes be glimpsed from the coast of Lusitania on clear days. Its population was easily in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps in the millions.

Its name, which was later given to the ocean that covered it, derived from its first king, Atlas — "Atlantis" means "daughters of Atlas" in ancient Greek.

It was surrounded by an archipelago of other, much smaller islands. Three groups of these survived the sinking: the Azores, the Canaries and the Madeiras. (That gives us the location of the island — but not its capital city, which was somewhere on its southeastern coast — pretty exactly.)

Its civilization first arose around 2500 BC — not the 9500 Plato cites; he or his source multiplied the island's 900-year history by a factor of ten.

Atlantean civilization didn't rely on any technology we're familiar with, but on magic — exactly what sort of magic isn't known, but what little is recorded of Atlantis all agrees that it was a civilization built on preternatural forces. Extensive use was made of a mineral called orichalc — literally "mountain copper," perhaps mined by gnomes or kobolds, and almost certainly magical in nature.

The Atlantean tongue, initially called Linear A by archeologists before its true provenance was recognized, has apparently been lost beyond all recovery — it was almost certainly not Indo-European and may not even have been human in origin.

The Atlanteans established colonies and trade routes on both sides of the Atlantic. In the west they built the walled city of Tulum on the Yucatan Peninsula and traded with the people whose distant descendants would be the Maya, Toltec, Olmec, etc. In the east they occupied the island of Crete and established a trading empire with the semi-barbaric tribes of the Aegean islands and coasts. They bypassed the Iberian and Italic peninsulas because the people there were simply too hostile and primitive to be worth dealing with, but traded with the Egyptians and Hittites.

However, they somehow angered several of their neighbors, and in the latter half of the 17th century BC they found themselves at war with an alliance of several ancient Hellenic tribes under the leadership of the Athenes, at least two different undersea races and quite likely with magical forces unknown to us.

In 1628 BC a magical weapon of unthinkable power was unleashed and Atlantis was sunk beneath the sea, its population drowned. A secondary blast took out the Cretan colony.

These explosions threw so much smoke and dust into the air that the skies were dark for weeks, resulting in crop failures and famines all over the world. Without supplies from the motherland, the colony at Tulum — and any other colonies that might have existed in the New World but are unknown to us — died out quickly; most of the Aegean colonies either starved, reverted to barbarism or surrendered to the Hellenes and were absorbed.

Crete itself, however, became a much smaller independent empire of its own, and as such survived another four centuries of gradual decline before its final collapse.

Whether the great destruction was the work of the enemies of Atlantis or a misfire of a device created by the Atlanteans themselves is not known. Modern-day theorists believe it may have been a version of Edison's manatron, constructed on a mammoth scale and with no provision for safely releasing excess energy, so that it became an immense explosive device -- but no modern nation could build a manatron capable of storing sufficient energy to sink a country the size of Atlantis. The exact nature of the "Atlantis device," or "A-bomb," remains a mystery.

AFTER ATLANTIS

The psychological after-effects of the Atlantean War were significant. In the magic-poor New World the sea, whence both the Atlanteans and their aquatic enemies had come, became a thing of terror and despair, so the Mayans never built fleets or seaports. In the Mediterranean it was magic that took the blame, and efforts at taming the arcane forces were looked upon with suspicion for the next two millennia. And in the undersea kingdoms...well, if there were any southerly undersea kingdoms they were apparently destroyed in the cataclysm. The northern kingdoms beneath the North Sea and the Irish Sea survived, but cut off contact with humanity for several centuries. It's from this period that the kelpie custom of luring people to their deaths by drowning dates; it may originally have been intended as a campaign of intimidation against any who might dare to follow in the footsteps of the Atlanteans.

As a result of the Atlantean aftermath the people of classical antiquity were surprisingly ignorant of and inept at magic and had almost no contact with the Lightborn or other eldritch tribes; thus the empires of Phoenicia, Carthage, Greece and Rome rose and fell almost entirely according to human schemes. Many people came to disbelieve in magic entirely during this era.

However, that changed in the summer of 800 AD.

THE PACT OF CHARLEMAGNE

In that year Charlemagne, King of the Franks, went to Rome to settle disputes surrounding Pope Leo III, who had split from the Eastern Church (although the break was not formalized and made permanent until 1054). Leo declared the Byzantine Empire to no longer be the true successor to Rome, because of the ascension of the Empress Irene three years before. The Western Church and Western Empire did not recognize the legitimacy of Irene's claim to the throne, officially because a female could not rule. This wasn't necessarily purely sexism — Irene was, ah, emotionally unstable, and had deposed and blinded her own son to take the throne.

Charlemagne, who'd long been the Papacy's strongest supporter, took Leo's side, rescued him from the mob and established him in the Holy See. In exchange, on Christmas Day Leo crowned Charles as the new Roman Emperor, creating the Holy Roman Empire.

Charlemagne's empire at this point included most of the old Western Empire, as well as a lot of territory in Germany that the Romans never held, so it wasn't a completely outrageous claim.

Charlemagne then returned to his capital at Aachen, which is in Germany at the moment, on the Belgian border.

And in Arrowsmith's world he may have been met there by an ambassador of the Seelie Court. Recognizing the potential threat posed by Charlemagne's united control of both secular and sacred authority, the Summerlands wished to negotiate for a peaceful coexistence between Christendom and their own creatures.

(Or maybe it happened at the Synod of Aix-la-Chapelle, which took place just before Charlemagne went to Rome to pull Leo's fat out of the fire. The Synod reformed the Western Church under Charlemagne's direction.)

The treaty was made, establishing a policy of non-interference but also requiring the Lightborn to offer tribute to Charlemagne and his heirs, in the form of magic and counsel, every so often. Under the Pact, humans, the Lightborn, Earthborn and other signatories accept contracts made with the other species as binding. Creatures that reject the Pact would be cast out and anathematized.

And incidentally, Charlemagne and his heirs were recognized by the Summerlands and other creatures of the Pact as herze-kings, linked to the magic of the lands they rule. One interesting characteristic of herze-kings is that **[REDACTED]**. Prior to the Pact, herze-kings were very rare, since humans can't create the necessary magical linkage by themselves — Arthur of the Britons was one of only a few known cases. After the Pact, though, herze-kings became far more common.

The Pact put a temporary end to the Catholic Church treating the creatures of myth and folklore as pagan abominations — they aren't Christian and they are thought to have no souls, but they're bound by the Pact and must be tolerated. And they can be used.

As a result, the more lawful sort of magical creatures gravitated to Latin Catholic lands, and their absence allowed darker forces to become dominant in the supernatural spheres of Orthodox countries — though the Orthodox churches fought hard to suppress vampires, werewolves and the like.

In 814 Charlemagne apparently died, leaving his empire to his son Louis the Pious — although **[REDACTED]**.

THE THREE KINGDOMS

In 817 Louis the Pious shared power with his three sons, Lothar, Louis and Pepin (a.k.a. Charles II) — the older Louis and Lothar shared the rule of the empire, while Pepin received Aquitania in the west and the younger Louis Bavaria in the east.

In 840 Louis died **[REDACTED]**, leaving Lothar I the new emperor — but Lothar's brothers had other ideas, and went to war against him. In 843 the Treaty of Verdun split the empire into three kingdoms. In our history these new kingdoms were officially called West Francia, East Francia, and Middle Francia, and eventually become known as France, Lotharingia (or Lorraine), and Germany. Lothar kept the title of Emperor.

In Arrowsmith's world, Lothar had better counsel — as emperor he was advised by wizards and aided the creatures of magic, and while he didn't always heed that advice or use the aid effectively, he came out better than our version did. Lotharingia, the Middle Kingdom, remained the most powerful of the three. Charles II did not have the nerve to call himself King of the Franks, and besides, with the greater knowledge of magic it was commonly understood that

older names have power, since they've had time to settle into the slow consciousness of the land itself. So the Western Kingdom, instead of France, became known by its Roman name of Gallia.

In 855 Lothar I died. In our history he divided his empire among his three sons; in Arrowsmith's he did not.

In our history, after about fifty years of fragmentation, Lotharingia was absorbed by the Holy Roman Empire, which was basically German. In Arrowsmith's it remained an independent kingdom, and the King of Lotharingia held the title of Emperor. In both histories Germany began to fragment while nominally all paying allegiance to the Emperor.

In Arrowsmith's history, when the last Carolingian heir of Lotharingia died in 875 the crown passed to Norman invaders — specifically to Dirk (or Dietrich, or Theodoric) the First. (In our history, Dirk I, possibly the son of this one, was the founder of Holland, somewhat later — being able to usurp the Lotharingian throne aborted this.) The Pope and the rest of Christendom could hardly leave the title of "emperor" in such hands, so it was instead granted to Lewis of Germany. Charles II of Gallia, busy with his own problems at the time, did not contest this. Much of the southern portion of Lotharingia, including all the Italian territories, passed into Imperial hands, as the newly-installed and unwelcome Normans were not able to hold them.

The result is that the Holy Roman Empire evolved much as in our world, and Gallia evolved much as France did, but the Norman Kingdom of Lotharingia stayed wedged between them.

THE NORTHLANDS

Otherwise the Middle Ages happened much as in our world, especially in the east — the Byzantines and the Orthodox Church did not join the Pact. There were a few noteworthy changes, though.

The Normans of Normandy (as opposed to the Lotharingian Normans, who ruled the Duchy of Flanders in our history) conquered England and renamed it Albion — as conquerors they deliberately wanted to disrupt the land's magic so that the more established inhabitants couldn't use it against them. ["Albion" was Pliny's name for the place; it's hybrid Latin, from a Celtic root meaning "high place."]

Despite the name change, the Celts still had more and better magic — even though they'd never been part of Charlemagne's empire, they'd signed onto the Pact enthusiastically at the first opportunity, while the Norsemen who were the Normans' ancestors had considered the use of magic unmanly. The Norman subjugation of Wales, Cornwall, Ireland and Man therefore went more slowly than in our world. To speed the effort, in the late 11th century and early 12th the Normans more or less allied themselves with two of the three Sea Kingdoms in the area — the kelpies, in the northern portion of the Irish Sea, and the selchies, in the North Sea. The mer-people, to the east of the selchies, have not signed the Pact and refused to get involved.

In practice, the kelpies and some of the selchies were as likely to drown lone Normans and Saxons as their supposed Celtic targets — they couldn't be bothered to notice differences between one bunch of humans and another. They did, however, learn to tell apart the flags that ships flew, and left Norman ships alone while preying on Celtic ones.

The Welsh and Irish retaliated by allying themselves with hobs, pookahs and the like, so that while the Normans/English/Albionese had the magical advantage at sea, the Celts were the more dangerous on land.

THE SEA TRIBES

This brought the three sea tribes into the circle of European politics, so to address them:

All are shapeshifters that can breathe either air or water.

Kelpies can take the form of horses, oddly enough, or of handsome young humans, and can talk in either form. They choose which form; it's not determined by environment. Their kingdom lies in the deepest part of the North Channel between Hibernia (Ireland) and Scotia (Scotland); the Mull of Kintyre overlooks the northern end of their primary territory and the Mull of Galloway the southern, though individual kelpies wander freely up into the Hebrides or down to the Isle of Man. Kelpies are untrustworthy even for magical beings — they're nominally bound by the Pact, but any individual kelpie may well break it and regret it later. They're almost completely amoral. They're socially quite primitive, choosing their kings by acclamation and then deposing them at whim, with no government other than these kings. They're prone to infatuations, whims and piques, but have short attention spans. Any sort of alliance with kelpies is going to break down quickly; on the other hand, they're easy to bribe for specific errands, if the errands are simple enough that they can be carried out before the kelpie gets distracted or bored. While they're fairly adventurous and explore ashore often, they don't like to stay on land too long. In horse form they can move supernaturally fast and carry much larger burdens than natural horses, but can't be trusted to stay on land; in human form they can be hideously ugly or stunningly beautiful — sometimes both at once, to different people — and have the power to seduce the unwary. They're partially immune to mortal weapons, and don't age — like the Lightborn, they can apparently live forever.

There aren't very many kelpies. This is probably a good thing. The exact number might only be in the hundreds.

Selchies or silkies are seals when in the sea, human on land — they have no voluntary control over this. "On land" is defined as having any portion exposed to air while any other portion is touching the ground — thus they can't swim as humans and can't wade as seals. Their lands extend around the entire north of Scotland, from Islay to the Isle of May, and across the North Sea to the coast of Norway. Usually they mind their own business, but they have no particular objection to dealing with humans. They're far more intelligent and trustworthy than kelpies. In addition to shapeshifting, they have the gift of prophecy, but are reluctant to use it since it usually comes at a high cost — often their prophecies, which tend to be unpleasant, become self-fulfilling. They can sometimes work other spells, usually bindings of various sorts, but they don't have and can't provide any sort of protection against mortal weapons. They tend to be fatalistic and mysterious and clearly don't think quite like humans. They live longer than humans, perhaps two or three times as long.

There are at least thousands of selchies, probably tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands.

The mer-people are your classic half-human/half-fish folk. They know spells that can transform them into humans,

either temporarily or permanently — the permanent spells aren't reversible and the temporary ones always have a pre-determined limit which can't be adjusted once set — but they don't like to use them, since these spells are difficult and costly.

Their lands are in the eastern North Sea and the shallow waters around Denmark and the lower Baltic; they don't go north of Gotland much because it's too cold.

Traditionally, they want little to do with humans, but they're as intelligent and varied as people, and think like people, where the selchies and kelpies are alien. This means any individual merman or mermaid might have his or her own ideas about dealing with people. As non-signatories to the Pact they are officially shunned, but the mer aren't allies with the Darkborn either, and go their own way. Humans and the mer may make individual bargains, and like bargains with other humans, whether they'll be honored or not is up to the individuals involved.

There are between two or three million mer-people in their kingdom, and individuals or groups might turn up almost anywhere — though they can't swim more than a day or two without resting on the sea bottom and can't live more than a mile or so below the surface — so ordinarily you won't find them in really deep water or too far from European coasts.

They live perhaps a time and a half as long as humans, or a little more — a merman is old at 100, ancient at 150, and long dead by 200.

A part of the Sea Kingdom (the mer-people ignore their less-human western relatives and call their land the Sea Kingdom) was a member of the Hanseatic League from 1229 to 1490; that faction signed the Pact. Otherwise, the mer have stayed out of political entanglements.

BARBAROSSA

In 1152 Frederick Barbarossa of the House of Hohenstauffen von Weiblingen, Duke of Swabia and King of Bavaria, became Emperor at about the age of twenty-nine — his father Conrad III had been elected to the title but never crowned. (Frederick's mother was a Bavarian princess; Conrad was Duke of Swabia only.) Barbarossa was a fierce and powerful ruler who feuded spectacularly with Pope Alexander III, fighting several wars in Italy before eventually making peace. He then sailed off on the Third Crusade and was allegedly drowned in the River Saleph in Cilicia (southern Turkey).

PRUSSIA

In 1230 AD, the Polish prince, Conrad of Mazovia, hired a military order called the Teutonic Knights to fight the pagan Prussians. (Yes, really.) The Teutonic Knights were not nice people — they were thrown out of the Holy Land — but they were tough and smart; they escaped Prince Conrad's control and wound up ruling Prussia themselves by 1295. **[REDACTED]**

MUSCOVY

It was in the 14th century in our history that the Muscovites started calling themselves Russians; in reality the original Russians, who'd ruled from their capital at Kiev, had been wiped out by the Mongols in the 13th century. This name change was a fairly successful attempt to claim a position as heirs to that great destroyed Christian nation and assert Moscow's primacy over the eastern Slavs.

In Arrowsmith's history the Muscovites, for magical reasons, stayed Muscovites.

EARLY PROTESTANTISM

The first stirrings of the Protestant Reformation began in the late 14th century, as various people got fed up with the Church. It wasn't just that the church was corrupt and materialistic — it pretty much always had been. It was more that the church was ineffective in dealing with the Plague and the huge economic changes taking place at the time. Heresies had been popping up all along, often taking the form of popular rebellion against the church's domination, but in the aftermath of the Plague — the huge labor shortage, the morbid concern with salvation in the face of so much death and so on — the church and the feudal states were no longer able to suppress them as effectively.

The Lollards were an English movement opposing the Church; one of their major complaints was the use of ritual, superstition and magic, rather than pure Christian faith. They did subversive things like translating the Bible from Latin into English, and were therefore wiped out by the Crown and Church working in concert.

In Arrowsmith's world the King and Church were aided by the Lightborn, who liked dealing openly with humans, rather than being considered creatures of Satan as they were in Orthodox lands. The Albionese Church thereby wound up permanently allied to the Lightborn, and the peasants of Albion were mistrustful of magic.

It was in Bohemia that Protestantism really got going, though. The Hussites established their own national church which the Catholic Church was unable to suppress.

More on this anon; first some geopolitical issues.

IBERIA

In our history, Spain was united by the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. However, Ferdinand apparently only came to the throne as the result of poisonings and disputed successions — not his doing, but he was the eventual beneficiary. Isabella took the throne because her niece, the rightful heir, was excluded. She should have married someone other than Ferdinand — an unwanted suitor who died on the way to the wedding. In Arrowsmith's world these events ran differently — Ferdinand's half-brother Charles was treated with a unicorn's horn and recovered from his poisoning, and Isabella's niece, whose claim had been disputed because of alleged bastardy, was magically shown beyond question to be Henry IV's daughter. Isabella was married off to her suitor, Pedro Giron, who avoided his fatal accident thanks to a seer's warning, and dropped out of history.

Therefore, Spain was never united, and Iberia instead still consists of Lusitania (Portugal), Navarre, Castile, Aragon and the tiny enclave of Grenada, speaking respectively Portugese, Basque, Castilian (virtually identical to our Spanish, the language of trade throughout the peninsula), Catalan and Moorish (a blend of Spanish and Arabic). Lusitania, Navarre, Castile and Aragon are Christian; Grenada is Moslem-ruled but has a large Jewish population. The four Christian kingdoms are closely related, their royal families multiply intermarried, but still distinct — Aragon is a constitutional monarchy with a strong king and a long tradition of internal solidarity and cooperation, the richest of them because

of its emphasis on sea trade; Castile, by far the largest, is agriculturally based, and is run by a constantly-squabbling, intrigue-riddled hereditary nobility; Navarre, by far the smallest of the Christian kingdoms, is relatively insular, backward and peaceful, with a constitutional monarchy and a weak monarch.

The Province of León is not a factor; it was conquered and absorbed by Castile before Isabella's reign, somewhere between 1140 and 1360.

It was Charles I of Aragon who gave Cristoforo Colombo three ships and the title of Admiral, and Aragon that colonized Cuba and much of the Caribbean -- but it was Castile that produced Balboa, Cortes and Pizarro (all three were from the same province, Extremadura, in Castile) and conquered the Spanish Main (well, the Atlantean Main) from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. The papal rulings of 1493 and 1494, dividing spheres of influence in the New World, made it a three-way split -- besides the east-west split between Castile and Portugal/Lusitania, everything north of 20°N. latitude was assigned to Aragon. This didn't stick any better in Arrowsmith's world than in ours -- Castile still got Mexico south of the Rio Grande, and Aragon nabbed some islands south of the line -- but it was a general guideline.

North America was named Columbia in honor of Columbus, but Castile and Portugal weren't about to name South America after someone working for Aragon, and instead called it Nueva Atlantida -- New Atlantis.

Amerigo Vespucci, who explored the South American coast in 1499 and 1501, didn't get his name attached to either; it's not immediately clear why not. Perhaps he ran afoul of something magical in the Amazon basin.

Portugal/Lusitania still managed to claim Brazil.

Navarre, being landlocked, never colonized the New World.

The Castilian Inquisition, incidentally, sent many Jews and heretics fleeing into the religiously-tolerant Aragon.

EASTERN DEVELOPMENTS

In the east, in our world, in 1472, Pope Paul II had his ward Zoe, the last Byzantine princess, married to the widowed Ivan III (the Great) of Muscovy-called-Russia, in hopes of cementing an alliance against the Turks. In so doing he handed Ivan a gigantic amount of prestige, establishing Muscovy's claim to be the heir of Byzantium; it was this that first allowed the Muscovite princes to claim the title "Tsar," and gave them the authority to expand into Novgorod, Poland-Lithuania, and the Khanate of the Golden Horde, creating the Russian Empire.

In Arrowsmith's world Princess Zoe consulted a seer and refused to go, on the grounds that her married life would be miserable, spent in perpetual conflict with her stepson's family over the succession. Pope Paul, after similar consultation, decided not to press the matter on the grounds that the alliance against the Turks wouldn't work out. As a result Muscovy never asserted itself, and European Russia remained divided into Novgorod, Muscovy, Crimea, Kazania, Astrakhan and the Khanate of the Golden Horde. Those last four, collectively Tatarstan or Tartaria, affiliated and eventually joined forces to become the Golden Khanates.

Novgorod is the mysterious Forest Kingdom in the far north, extending north and east from the vicinity of St. Petersburg (which was never built).

Muscovy is the area around Moscow, from Smolensk in the west almost to Nizhni Novgorod in the east.

Crimea is the peninsula in the Black Sea.

Kazania lies east of Muscovy, extending to the Urals.

Astrakhan includes the Caucasus and the lands around the northern half of the Caspian Sea.

The former Khanate of the Golden Horde, later renamed the Central Khanate, is surrounded by Muscovy to the north, Kazania to the east, Astrakhan to the southeast and Crimea to the southwest.

It's possible that Zoe then married someone interesting like a Prince of the Summerlands, giving the Lightborn a claim to the mantle of Rome.

That brings us into the sixteenth century and back to the founding of Protestantism.

PROTESTANTISM II: THIS TIME IT'S THE REFORMATION

In 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church — except that in Arrowsmith's world there were 99. The additional four denounced the Catholic Church's dealings with dark powers consequent to the "unholy Pact" of Charlemagne.

In 1529 the Lutheran princes filed the formal Protest at the Second Diet of Speyer that gives Protestantism its name.

Also in 1529, Henry VIII began the process of pulling Albion out of the Roman church, completed in 1534. The Ten Articles of 1536 and the Six Articles of 1539 that established Anglican doctrine were, in Arrowsmith's world, the Twelve Articles and the Seven Articles, and included an affirmation of the Pact of Charlemagne. The Church of Albion began and remained, with only occasional lapses, on good terms with the Lightborn and magicians of all sorts.

Protestant sects proliferated hugely. Lutheran and Calvinist churches declared all magic to be demonic in nature; the Anabaptists and later the Mennonites distinguished between godly and ungodly magic, but assumed "ungodly" to be the default and most magic to be a snare and a delusion. On the other hand, mystical sects — Denckians, Franckians, and Schwenkfeldians — embraced magic. (These are real sects; I believe they're all extinct in our world, but they probably survive in Arrowsmith's.)

During this unrest there was an odd proliferation of powerful magicians — Paracelsus (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541), Faust (Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior, died 1541) and others.

The loss of Bohemia, Germany and Albion prompted the Catholic Church under Paul III (pope, 1534-1549) to continue and expand the reforms begun in the 14th century, a process that continued through the final Council of Trent in 1563. The Council of Trent repudiated the Pact of Charlemagne, more or less agreeing with Luther and Calvin that magic was the work of the Devil, and the Society of the

Cross, founded in 1540 and already serving as the Church's secret police, was charged with stamping out unauthorized magic throughout the Catholic world. Crux agents traveled everywhere, teaching, arguing and often bringing the Inquisition.

One difference between the Catholic and Protestant attitudes, though, was that the Church's own magic — transubstantiation, absolution, miracles — remained acceptable; it was creatures of magic and natural magic that were repudiated. In Protestant countries, on the other hand, most churches would have nothing to do with this "high magic," which smacked of popery — salvation was dependent upon faith, not miracles — but low magic often gained a tacit acceptance despite the warnings of Calvin and Luther.

Note that Lotharingia remained Catholic, as did Gallia, Poland, Bavaria, Tyrolia and all the Iberian kingdoms.

TYROLIA

Tyrolia, you ask? Yes, Tyrolia. In our world the Austrian empire pretty much began when the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, of the House of Habsburg, King of Rome, managed to pull together various treaties and marriages during the period 1490-1526, winding up as nominal ruler of Bohemia, Hungary, Tyrolia, Milan and Burgundy, in addition to Rome. (His son married his way onto the Spanish throne, but we'll ignore that.) By the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 his descendant Ferdinand III had simplified this mess down to Austria, Styria, Tyrolia, Bohemia, Hungary, some pieces of northern Italy and whatever lands could be taken from the Turks — a fairly cohesive chunk of real estate. Burgundy had become "the Spanish Netherlands" and had gone to the Spanish branch when Charles V split the family holdings.

The name Austria means "eastland." In German it's Oesterreich, "eastern empire," which is closer to accurate. It was originally the eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire.

In Arrowsmith's world, where Spain never united and the Norman kingdom of Lotharingia still existed, the western branch of the Habsburg empire never existed, so there was no reason to emphasize the eastern aspect.

Furthermore, in 1529 the Ottoman Turks, under Suleiman II, captured Wien, the capital of the Archduchy of Austria, with the aid of a force of djinni, forcing the Habsburgs to retreat to a temporary capital at Innsbruck, in Tyrolia. (Prague might seem to make more sense, but they assumed it would be the Turks' next target, and besides, they were good Catholics and Prague wasn't very welcoming to Catholics just then. Salzburg might also seem to make sense, but the Archbishopric of Salzburg was independent at the time, and not available to them.)

Therefore, the Habsburgs chose to call their combined lands Tyrolia, and the name stuck even after they recaptured Wien in 1531. (Suleiman II had lost control of the djinni by then. Magic is tricky stuff.)

THE NEW WORLD

The European powers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century colonized the New World of Columbia and New Atlantis, of course. New Atlantis wasn't very different from South America — Portugese Brasil, Castilian Peru, New Castile (our Greater

Colombia, now Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama), Castilian Mexico.

Aragon settled Florida, Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, etc. Gallia established their colonies at Montreal and Quebec in their territory of Acadia. Lotharingia settled New Amsterdam and Sint Maarten and the like, but put more energy into the East Indies, Hindustan (India), and Zuidland (Australia).

And Albion set colonies in Virginia, Carolina and New Albion, and turned the Hudson Bay Company loose in Prince Rupert's Land.

EMPIRE BUILDING

The colonial/imperial period of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries ran very much like our own history, for the most part — the Turks retreated before the Tyrolian advance, Britannia and Gallia expanded their empires and so on. Castile filled the role of Spain, basically, with Aragon snatching bits and pieces — Navarre never amounted to much and Grenada sank deeper into decadence. In the east, Novgorod remained a sleeping giant in the north, more involved with its own internal matters and recurring border wars with Muscovy than the outside world; propelled by its people's fondness for magic and distaste for its Muscovite enemies, it drifted from its nominal Orthodoxy into a sort of semi-paganism.

Muscovy and the Khanates alternated between fighting each other and joining forces against Turkish expansion. The Khanates formed a federation, an elective monarchy ruled by the Great Khan, in self-defense against the Muscovites and Turks — though they sometimes joined the Turks in fighting Muscovy, as well. Muscovy expanded significantly, but never approached the size of our Russia.

This in turn meant that the Great Northern War of 1700-1721 and the subsequent Partition of Poland didn't happen. Sweden remained a major power, controlling Finland, Ingria and Livonia.

Prussia expanded under the Hohenzollerns, just as in our world — except for the presence of a mysterious adviser every so often, so that they were actually slightly more successful in the west.

Louisiana was claimed by the Gauls, New Orleans was established in 1717 and then the entire territory was ceded to Aragon by secret treaty in 1769 — just as in our world, except it was France and Spain, rather than Gallia and Aragon.

However, a major difference resulted from the fact that Spain was never united, and the throne of Castile was in a different branch of the old royal family rather than winding up occupied by the western Habsburgs — the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) didn't happen. This means that the British didn't take the Maritime Provinces of Canada from the French, and the Gallic territory of Acadia-Canada stayed entirely Gallic. It also means that the Duchy of Savoy didn't become the Kingdom of Sardinia. Which may seem trivial but it affects eventual Italian unification, or the lack thereof.

It was the War of the Spanish Succession that established France and Britain as the two great powers of Europe; without it, matters remain more diffuse. Without that or the Great Northern War...well, there would have been wars, but we'll assume they didn't really make major permanent changes.

The War of Jenkins' Ear began in 1739, between Albion and Castile, and led into the Wars of the Austrian Succession. No change there.

The Seven Years' War, known in North America as the French and Indian War, also took place, but the British didn't fare quite so well; they took the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland from Gallia, but not all of Acadia-Canada. And because the Spanish participant was Castile, not Aragon, Florida was unaffected.

One minor difference is that in 1764 George III settled the dispute between New York and New Hampshire differently, and gave Vermont to New Hampshire.

THE ERA OF REVOLUTIONS

The Columbian Revolution took place in 1776-1783, but the colonial victory was somewhat more decisive than in our world, due to the lesser British presence in Canada. Columbia is a bit feistier right from the start.

In 1789, when the Gallic Revolution started, Columbian agents incited Acadia-Canada into full-fledged rebellion against their Old World masters as well. In 1793 the Jacobins, busy with their own more urgent concerns in Europe, made a deal — independence in exchange for Acadia-Canada's agreement to stay the hell out of European wars, renounce all claims on property in Gallia or Lotharingia (where revolution had also broken out), and make a cash payment. Later Gallic governments occasionally tried to renege on this agreement, only to run into ferocious Columbian opposition that convinced them to drop the matter.

As in our world, the French Revolution triggered others: the Batavian Republic in Lotharingia, the Polish Republic in Poland-Lithuania, and a few years later rebellions all through the continents of Columbia and New Atlantis.

The existence of the Polish Republic resulted in the partitioning of Poland in our world; in Arrowsmith's, with the absence of Imperial Russia, this process didn't occur. Prussia and Tyrolia grabbed chunks of Polish territory but the country didn't disappear off the map.

The division of Castile and Aragon and the stronger Columbia resulted in the first round of revolutions in the New World succeeding, where they were suppressed in our world; thus the Republic of Mexico and the Republic of La Plata (Argentina) gained independence in 1810, and the United Provinces of New Atlantis (Central America), the Republic of New Castile (Greater Columbia) and Paraguay in 1811.

And in 1811 (just as in our world) there was a slave uprising in New Orleans in 1811. Unlike our world, this one used voodoo to achieve its goal, acquiring the name the Voodoo Rebellion, and 5,000 slaves successfully escaped to the west, where they joined forces with the Indios and other revolutionaries and founded the Republic of Tejas. The border between Mexico and Tejas was set just south of Tampico, on the Rio Panuco.

Uruguay became independent in 1814, Chile in 1816, the Coastal Republics (Tacna, Arica, Tarapaca, and Atacama, which are parts of Chile and Peru in our world) in 1818, Florida (which includes the entire Gulf Coast to the Red River) in 1819, Peru in 1821, Brasil in 1822 and Bolivia in 1825.

In 1822 Denmark Vesey, a slave in South Carolina, organized a slave revolt. In our world he was betrayed by two of his fellow slaves and was hanged, the whole

thing aborted; in Arrowsmith's world the two did not betray him, and he and his army of 9,000 were able to start an uprising that spread all through the South. The freed slaves then headed west to join their compatriots in Tejas, and the Columbian Congress outlawed slavery — not really so much out of moral indignation as because the uprising had demonstrated how dangerous it was to keep unwilling workers around.

Monroe's Doctrine & Non-Manifest Destiny

In 1823, after the signing of a peace treaty between Columbia and Tejas, the presidents of Columbia, Acadia-Canada, Tejas and Florida issued a joint statement of the Monroe Doctrine, named after the Columbian president who wrote it, telling the European powers that meddling in the affairs of the New World was no longer welcome.

In 1826, probably inspired by the Monroe Doctrine, Florida and Haiti (independent since 1801) invaded still-Aragonese Cuba, setting off a new round of rebellions and creating the League of Grand Florida, which took control of most of the Caribbean — though Jamaica stayed in Albionese hands.

In 1836 the Tejas-Mexican War resulted in the independence of California — a somewhat larger California than ours.

The Oregon Territory was not seriously disputed in Arrowsmith's world — Russia and the U.S. couldn't get at it and British Canada didn't exist (though the Hudson's Bay Company's territory of Rupert's Land did), so only Castile, expanding northward from Mexico, had really pushed a claim. As a result, California extended from slightly south of Mazatlan to 54x40' north latitude.

Tejas also expanded to the north. However, a big swath of the west remained in the undisputed possession of the Native tribes, particularly the Sioux, who organized the Nation of Dakota.

In 1847 the Mormons, fleeing Nauvoo, Virginia under the leadership of Brigham Young, crossed Tejas to found Salt Lake City and established the theocratic Kingdom of Deseret — which never had any king other than God, but the Mormons liked the sound of it. The name Deseret, by the way, is from the Book of Mormon and means the land of the honeybee.

54x40' was the negotiated southern border of the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had officially been called Rupert's Land. In 1867 Newfoundland was granted dominion status within the British Empire, and this territory, extending from Baffin Island to the Bering Strait, was put under Newfoundlander administration, completing the map of the Columbian continent.

Meanwhile, Back in Europe

Meanwhile, back in Europe, the Gallic Revolution followed roughly the same path as the French Revolution, save that it was Napoleon's march to Novgorod, rather than Moscow, that ended in (magically-induced) disaster.

In 1815 the Congress of Wien redrew the map of Europe, reinstating most of the pre-Revolutionary borders. Polonia (Poland) was not annexed by Russia, however, since Russia didn't exist. The united kingdom of Sweden and Norway — which had not lost

Finland, Courland or Livonia — took the name Scania, since much less than half of it was actually Sweden. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies adopted the name Naples for convenience.

In our world, Italy was mostly united by the House of Savoy, the kings of Sardinia, in 1859-1860. Here, because Savoy never became the Kingdom of Sardinia (in fact, Sardinia itself was part of Aragon), that didn't happen. Instead Italy remained divided between Naples in the south and Tuscany-Savoy in the northwest. The northeast, which had once been the Republic of Venice, was Tyrolian. The Papal States, except for the city of Rome itself, were ceded to Tuscany-Savoy or Naples — largely to keep them out of Tyrolian hands.

In our world, Prussia united the German Empire with a series of three wars in the period 1864-1870. In Arrowsmith's world the first two wars, against Denmark and Tyrolia, went as they did for us, but the third war, the Franco-Prussian War, was averted — likely due to magical intervention. The Second Empire never fell in Gallia, and upon the death of Napoleon III in 1873 his son Napoleon IV became Emperor at the tender age of seventeen.

As for Prussia, the other two wars had united all of northern Germany under Prussian rule, but the southern kingdoms of Bavaria and Baden-Wurttemberg remained independent. Prussia negotiated a border-straightening agreement whereby Hohenzollern itself (which had no connection to Prussia) was ceded to Baden-Wurttemberg in exchange for Darmstadt.

In the Balkans the Ottoman Empire gradually crumbled away; much of the territory lost went to the Tyrolian Empire (which underwent some internal upheaval and became Tyrolia-Hungary), but Hellas (1821), Montenegro (1860), Bulgaria (1878), Wallachia (1856) and Serbia (1817) became independent kingdoms.

Albania and Macedonia remained Turkish until 1913 in both worlds; the Third Balkan War, which took them away from Turkey, did not occur.

THE WIDER WORLD

Moving elsewhere for a moment: Africa and Asia developed much as in our world, save that north Asia was not annexed by the Russian Empire; instead the western portion remained in the Mongol hands of the Golden Khanates, while the east was taken by the empire of Cathay under the Manchu dynasty. The Gallic hold on Annam (French Indochina) was somewhat more tenuous, and Castile may have taken the Philippines.

MAGIC IN A BOTTLE

Edison invents the manatron, ushering in the age of industrial magic. This, along with other magical developments, remains to be explored.

THE COLUMBIAN ALLIANCE

There was a war, around the time of the real-world Spanish-American War, in which Castile attempts to retake Mexico — and Columbia, Florida, Tejas and California enforced the Monroe Doctrine. The end result: Stronger alliances between Columbian nations (although Mexico feels pushed around, and isn't part of it), California winds up with the Philippines and

a bunch of Columbian soldiers get wartime experience. It's possible that this was the first war where industrial magic played a part, but nobody yet understood the full ramifications of a large-scale magical war.

ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

Returning to Europe: Gallia and Lotharingia have been allies since Napoleon's day; Bavaria, wary of Prussia, is also allied with Gallia. Baden-Wurttemberg, entranced by the notion of pan-German unity, is allied with Prussia and Tyrolia-Hungary.

Serbia and Muscovy are allies, bound by their common Slav/Orthodox heritage and hatred of the Turks. Serbia has also made an alliance with Gallia. Wallachia does not trust Serbia or Muscovy but has also allied itself with Gallia.

Scania has a loose alliance with Prussia, probably in hopes of picking up some territory from Polonia or Novgorod when Prussia turns its attention eastward, as the Scanian king thinks it eventually must. Polonia has a mutual defense treaty with Lotharingia and is negotiating with Albion.

Novgorod is wavering and has not chosen sides.

And so on.

Serbia is displeased by the 1908 annexation of Bosnia by Tyrolia-Hungary, Tyrolia-Hungary's trade sanctions on pork and the continued independence of Montenegro, and when Archduke Franz Ferdinand pays a visit to Sarajevo in 1914, he gets assassinated and chaos erupts.

And in Connecticut, in the United States of Columbia, on the shores of Lake Erie, a boy named Fletcher Arrowsmith is growing up with dreams of adventure...

APPENDIX THREE

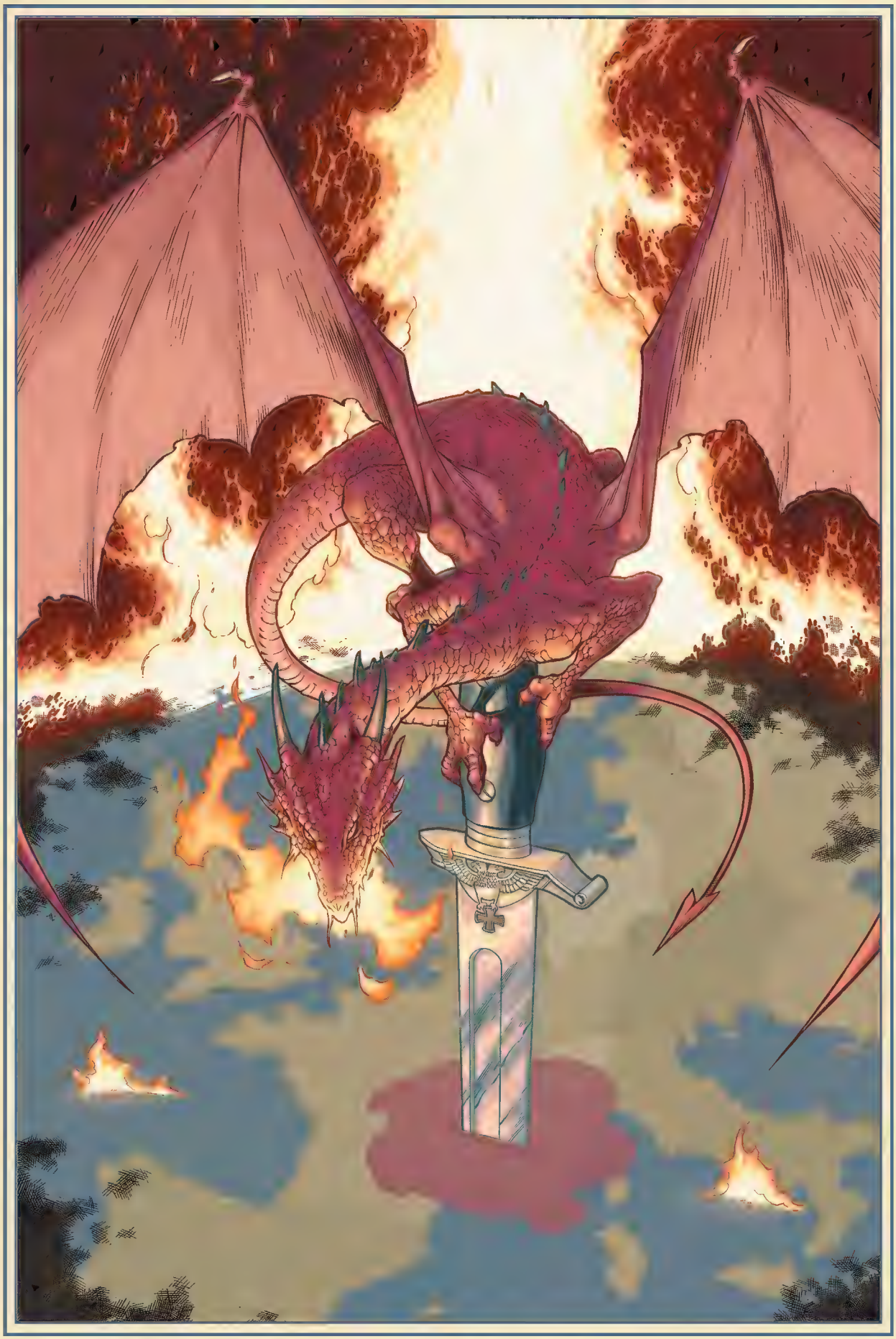
Cover Gallery

What follows are the covers for the Arrowsmith side of the *Astro City/Arrowsmith: The Flip Book* (which ran the 8-page Prelude to the series) and *Arrowsmith* 1-6. The cover art to the 2004 trade paperback collection can be found on page 2, as a part of our title spread.

All are by Carlos Pacheco, Jesús Merino and Alex Sinclair.

—kdb

CARLOS PACHECO 2002
I WANT YOU
S ARMY
LIST
Beat back the HUN
with
LIBERTY



ARROWSMITH ISSUE 2

ARROWSMITH ISSUE 3

ARROWSMITH ISSUE 4

ARROWSMITH ISSUE 5

PACHECO
MERINO

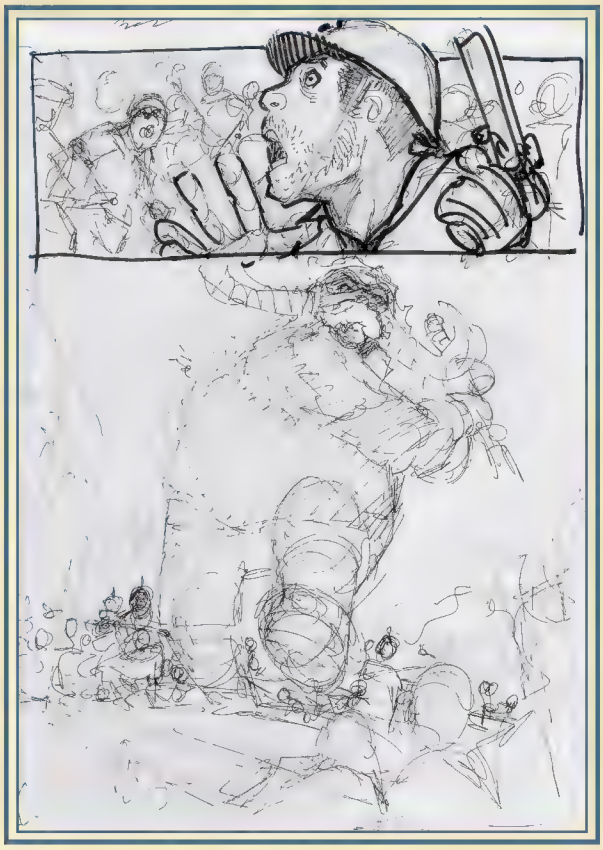
APPENDIX FOUR

Wizardry in Line and Color

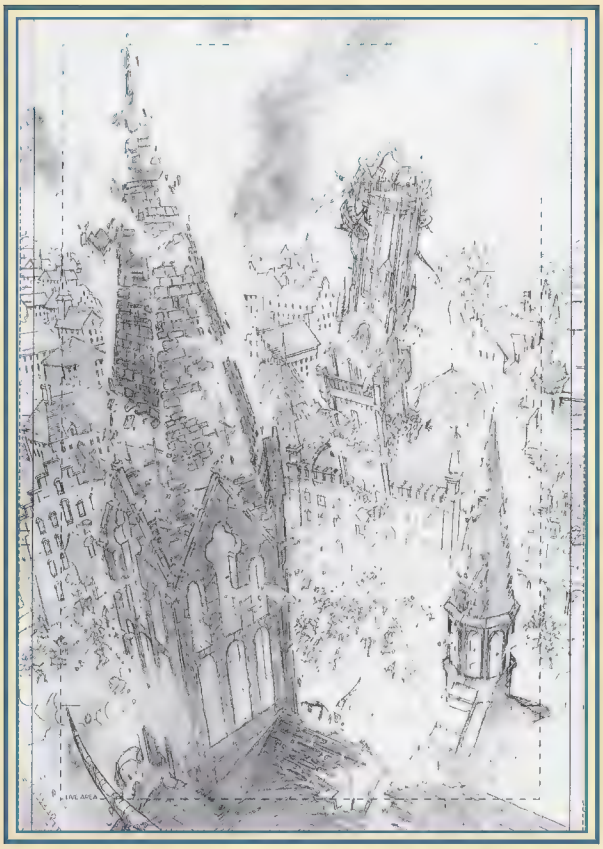
And how does the world of *Arrowsmith* come to life? Here's a look at how Carlos and the team work their particular brand of magic!

—kdb

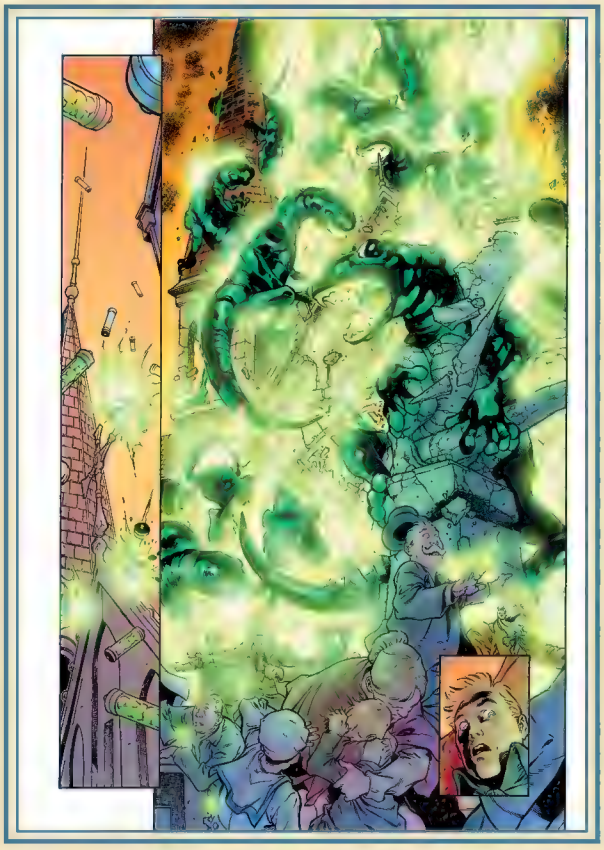
Location design sketch by Carlos, finished spread by Carlos, Jesus and Alex.



Storytelling roughs by Carlos, finished art by Carlos, Jesús and Alex.



Pencils by Carlos, finished art by Carlos, Jesús and Alex.



Location design sketch by Carlos, finished spread by Carlos, Jesús and Alex.

AND DON'T MISS...

Arrowsmith™
Behind Enemy Lines

THE ALL-NEW MINISERIES ON SALE NOW!

ABOUT THE CREATORS

KURT BUSIEK is the New York Times bestselling and Eisner Award-winning writer of celebrated runs on *Avengers*, *Superman* (with Pacheco) and more, including the breakout hit *Marvels*, and the co-creator of *Astro City*, *Autumnlands* and *Thunderbolts*, among others. He lives in the Portland, Oregon area with his wife Ann and their children Dan and Kat.

CARLOS PACHECO is an internationally-successful artist, working in Spain, England and the United States. Coming to prominence for his work on *Dark Guard*, *Flash*, *Fantastic Four* and others, he's perhaps best known for *Avengers Forever* (with Busiek), *Green Lantern* and *X-Men*, and has co-created the series *Iberia Inc.* and *Triada Vértice*. He makes his home in San Roque, Spain.

JESÚS MERINO began his career working for the Spanish publisher Planeta DeAgostini, and has penciled or inked many series at Marvel and DC, including *Avengers Forever*, *Superman*, *JSA*, *Superman/Batman* and more.

ALEX SINCLAIR broke in to comics at Wildstorm Productions, where he became known for his award-winning color work over Jim Lee & Scott Williams. He's since colored virtually every character at DC Comics and many at Marvel, and has had a long run on *Astro City* (with Busiek).

COMICRAFT is an award-winning design and lettering studio founded by Richard Starkings in 1992. Its work has appeared in a wide variety of comics from *Avengers* to *X-Men*, as well as television, movies and video games. Tyler Smith lives and works in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Thule
Nuuk
Newfoundland
Newfoundland
St. John's
Dakota
Acadia-Canada
Quebec
Montreal
Mass.
N.H.
North Virginia
N.Y.
New York
Mass.
Boston
Mass.
Mass.
R.I.
Connecticut.
Pennsylvania
N.J.
Delaware
M.D.
Washington F.E.
United States of Columbia
Virginia
Norfolk
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia
Charleston
Tejas
San Antonio
New Orleans
Grand Florida
Mexico
Tenochtitlan
Zion
Deseret
Monterey
California
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
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A New Map of
North America
New Castile

A New Map
of
Europe
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Scania
Novgorod
Stockholm
BALTIC SEA
Scania
Novgorod
Moskva
Muscovy
Scotia
NORTH SEA
Denmark
Hibernia
Britannia
Gwynedd
Albion
London
Vilnius
Polonia-Lithuania
Cent. Kh.
Berlin
Warsaw
Antwerp
Aachen
Prussia
Lotharingia
Bavaria
Stuttgart
Swabia
Munchen
Paris
Wien
Khanate of Crimea
Helvetia
Gallia
Tyrolia-Hungary
Wallachia
Tuscany
Genoa
Serbia
Bulgaria
BLACK SEA
Navarre
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Aragon
Barcelona
Castile
Tuscany
The Holy See
Naples
Napoli
Montenegro
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Ottoman Empire
Hellas
Athens
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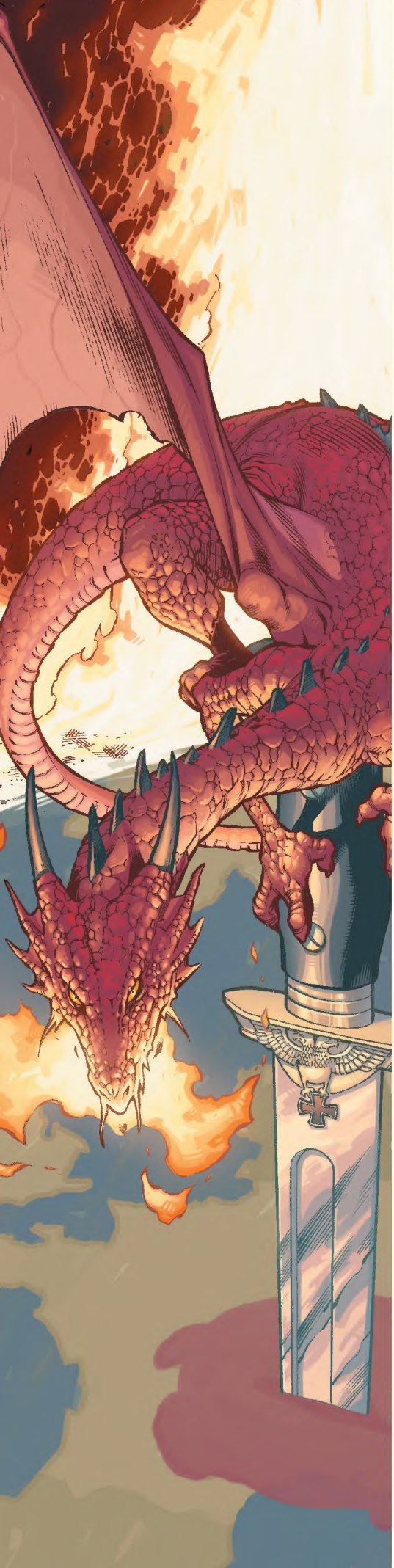
Tunis
Naples
MEDITERRANEAN SEA



THE WAR TO END ALL WARS. THIS TIME WITH DRAGONS.

Meet Fletcher Arrowsmith, a young dreamer in a world where wizards, trolls and magic spells are as much a part of World War I as bullets and barbed wire. Joining the Overseas Aero Corps in hopes of adventure and glory, he becomes an airman, one of the flying wizards who do battle in the skies over the trenches. But what Fletcher experiences will leave him changed forever...if he survives.

The superstar team of **KURT BUSIEK** (ASTRO CITY, *Marvels*, *Avengers*) and **CARLOS PACHECO** (*Avengers Forever*, *Superman*, *X-Men*) bring you a world — and a war — like no other.

"One of the best alternate history and fantasy comics out there. If you're looking for a fantasy twist on World War I, or a good comic in general, it can't be beat."

-Amazing Stories

"Pacheco's designs and storytelling are brought out beautifully by Merino's fine inks and Sinclair's vivid colors."

-Comics Alliance

"A mature reflection on war, innocence and the future."

-Atomic Junkshop

Collects ARROWSMITH 1-6 and ARROWSMITH: THE FLIP BOOK.

Also featuring an extensive bonus section, including an all-new afterword, original series proposals, character designs, a comprehensive history of the world of Arrowsmith and more.

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Rated M/Mature
ACTION & ADVENTURE, FANTASY, WAR & MILITARY